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Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the in-depth evaluation of the disarmament programme

Note by the Secretary-General

In conformity with paragraph 5 (e) (i) of General Assembly resolution 48/218 B of 29 July 1994, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the attached report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the in-depth evaluation of the disarmament programme, dated 18 March 1999. The report has been reviewed by the relevant departments and offices. The Secretary-General takes note of its findings and concurs with its recommendations.

* E/AC.51/1999/1.

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In-depth evaluation of the Disarmament Programme

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Summary

The present report reviews the achievements and shortcomings of the disarmament programme in supporting the work of the international disarmament machinery — the First Committee of the General Assembly, the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament — implementing General Assembly resolutions and decisions, and providing the assistance requested to parties to multilateral disarmament agreements. The programme is implemented by the Department for Disarmament Affairs of the Secretariat.

Delegations are generally satisfied with Department for Disarmament Affairs secretariat support to multilateral bodies. Shortcomings were mostly related to the technical information provided to Member States, the activities of the regional centres, the Disarmament Information Programme, the cooperation with regional organizations, and development of contacts with specialized agencies, research and non-governmental institutions as mandated in the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly.

Shortcomings are partly, but not entirely, related to the decrease in resources allocated to the programme since 1992, the decrease in extrabudgetary resources being very pronounced. In the meantime, priorities agreed upon at the tenth special session remain pressing and additional tasks have been mandated.

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I. Introduction

1. At its thirty-seventh session, the Committee for Programme and Coordination recommended to the General Assembly that an in-depth evaluation of the programme on disarmament be prepared for consideration by the Committee in 1999 (A/52/16,[1] para. 306).

2. The in-depth evaluation reviewed all the activities of the programme. During the period of the medium-term plan for 1992–1997, the activities of the programme on disarmament were carried out under four subprogrammes. The medium-term plan for the period 1998–2001 sets out five main objectives, namely, (a) to support deliberation and negotiation; (b) to follow and assess current and future trends; (c) to support and promote regional disarmament efforts and initiatives; (d) to provide factual information on the disarmament efforts of the United Nations; and (e) to continue to inform the public. They reflect the same basic mandates upon which the previous plan was based and incorporate new mandates. The present report follows the structure of the current medium-term plan: deliberation and negotiation (section III); following and assessing current and future trends (section IV); support for, and promotion of, regional disarmament efforts and initiatives (section V); and information (section VI). Disarmament is specifically identified as one of the eight priority areas of work of the Organization in the medium-term plan for the period 1998–2001.

3. In the conduct of the in-depth evaluation, the following categories of information were utilized by the Central Evaluation Unit of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS): (a) United Nations documents; (b) information from internal sources (the Programme's internal assessments and internal working documents); (c) structured interviews and consultations with a wide range of government representatives in New York and Geneva, members of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, staff of the programme, staff of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, staff of Secretariat departments and organizations of the United Nations system participating in relevant coordinating mechanisms, such as the Executive Committee on Peace and Security, or previously involved in the activities of the World Disarmament Campaign. Treaty-implementing organizations and regional organizations involved in disarmament-related issues were also consulted.

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 16.*

II. United Nations programme on disarmament

A. Intergovernmental bodies

4. The Organization's role in disarmament was established by the Charter of the United Nations, Article 11 of which states: "The General Assembly may consider the general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security, including the principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments, and may make recommendations with regard to such principles to the Members or to the Security Council or to both". Currently, the multilateral machinery through which disarmament issues are considered consists of two kinds of bodies, (a) deliberative — the General Assembly, including the First Committee, and the Disarmament Commission — and (b) negotiating — the Conference on Disarmament. The Department for Disarmament Affairs provides most of the secretariat services for these bodies.

5. The First Committee is the key organ of the General Assembly for disarmament and related international security questions. It adopts relevant draft resolutions and recommends them to the Assembly for adoption. The Disarmament Commission provides a subsidiary forum for deliberation on disarmament issues. It allows for in-depth deliberations on specific issues, leading to the submission of concrete recommendations on those issues. The Commission reports annually to the General Assembly. In 1992, the General Assembly initiated a reassessment of the multilateral arms control and disarmament machinery. Since then, the Commission has further concentrated its efforts on specific subjects. The question of the rationalization of the work of the First Committee remained on the Committee's agenda. In 1998, the Assembly decided to streamline the work of the deliberative bodies and to keep the matter under review (see decisions 52/416 B and 52/492).

6. In 1978, 1982 and 1988 the General Assembly convened special sessions devoted entirely to the question of disarmament (tenth, twelfth and fifteenth special sessions). In 1988, the General Assembly reaffirmed the validity of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session, as reflecting a historic consensus on the part of the international community that the halting and reversing of the arms race, in particular the nuclear-arms race, and the achievement of genuine disarmament are tasks of primary importance and urgency (resolution 43/77 B). In 1994, the General Assembly, welcoming the recent positive changes in the international landscape, decided to convene, in 1997

if possible, the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution 49/75 I); as at the end of 1998, no consensus has been reached on the date, objectives and agenda for the fourth special session.

7. The Conference on Disarmament is the single multilateral negotiating forum of the international community on arms limitation and disarmament. Following the agreement of Member States, endorsed by the General Assembly at its first special session devoted to disarmament, the Conference is the successor to the previous multilateral negotiating bodies, created outside but linked to the United Nations. In adopting its programme of work, the Conference takes into account the recommendations of the General Assembly and the proposals presented by its members. The Conference reports annually to the General Assembly, or more frequently as appropriate. A personal representative of the Secretary-General serves as the Secretary-General of the Conference. The Conference functions according to its own rules of procedure, which provide for the adoption of all decisions by consensus only. Since its establishment, in 1979, the Conference has included all the nuclear-weapon States and all other militarily significant States; its membership reflects the main political and geographical groups. In 1996, the Conference admitted 23 countries as new members, bringing the total membership to 61. In addition, some 50 States, not members of the Conference, are regularly invited to participate in its work, upon their request.

8. The Conference on Disarmament negotiates multilateral arms limitation and disarmament agreements. It concluded negotiations on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, in 1992, and on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, in 1996. The 1997 session was characterized by a lack of consensus, which was a source of concern. At the opening of the 1998 session the Secretary-General, in his message, stated that the Conference had in the past contributed to the successful negotiation of major global disarmament treaties. Its potential for other multilateral negotiations remained a source of hope and promise for global disarmament (see CD/PV.779). In 1998, the Conference decided to initiate negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

B. Secretariat arrangements

9. The implementation of the disarmament programme is guided by the priorities established in the relevant General Assembly resolutions and decisions. Currently the activities under this programme are carried out by the Department for Disarmament Affairs. The Department is located in New York, with one branch at Geneva; it is also responsible for the activities of three regional centres for peace and disarmament. The Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters provides the Secretary-General with advice on matters relevant to its mandate (see paras. 35–37 below).

10. During the period under review, the status of the Department changed several times. In 1992, it was integrated as an Office in the Department of Political Affairs, which had as primary focus of its work preventive diplomacy and peacemaking (proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994–1995 (A/48/6/Rev.1,[2] para. 3.16)). Other than the position of Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, all senior positions above D-1 level were abolished. Early in 1993, the General Assembly urged the Secretary-General to strengthen the Office in order to ensure that it has the necessary means and resources to carry out its mandated tasks (resolution 47/54 G). Subsequently the Office was renamed Centre for Disarmament Affairs. In 1997, the Secretary-General, in his report entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform", considered disarmament to be a central issue on the global agenda (A/51/950, para. 122), and proposed the re-establishment of the Department for Disarmament Affairs. The new Department was established at the beginning of 1998 and organized in five branches: the Conference on Disarmament Secretariat and Conference Support Branch (Geneva), the Weapons of Mass Destruction Branch, the Conventional Arms (including Practical Disarmament Measures) Branch, the Monitoring, Database and Information Branch and the Regional Disarmament Branch.

11. Comparing regular budget funds available to the Department for Disarmament Affairs before the 1992 restructuring and after its re-establishment in 1998, it can be noted that, in real terms, the resources of the Department decreased by 22 per cent. The impact on specific activities is reviewed in the different sections below. The decline of extrabudgetary funds is rather sharp. In 1990–1991, extrabudgetary funds were $6.3 million; in 1996–1997, they were $1.4 million, that is, less than a quarter of the 1990–1991 amount. These facts point to a weakened

[2] Ibid., *Forty-eighth session, Supplement No. 6*, vol. I.

capacity of the Secretariat to support the programme. Careful examination of the role of the Secretariat and focus on priority tasks are required but, considering the structure of the departmental workload, the potential for gains through internal rearrangements appears limited.

12. The programme budget for the biennium 1996–1997, as approved by the General Assembly, stated that the efforts of the international community were still focused on weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear ones, but were becoming increasingly concerned with the growth and proliferation of various types of conventional weapons (A/50/6/Rev.1,[3] para. 2.81). The programme budget for the biennium 1998–1999 maintains the same approach. At the twenty-ninth session of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, in June 1997, all the members of the Board except one concluded that the responsibilities of the disarmament and arms control sector of the United Nations would increase, and thus supported strengthening its staff and resources. They pointed specifically to additional tasks and duties in the area of practical disarmament in the conventional field, the implementation of arms agreements regarding weapons of mass destruction, the facilitating of regional agreements and confidence-building measures and the current and future tasks associated with the implementation of international agreements on anti-personnel landmines (A/52/282, para. 4).

III. Deliberation and negotiation

A. Secretariat organizational and in-session support to meetings

13. The Department for Disarmament Affairs provides secretariat and administrative services related to the planning, organization and conduct of meetings as well as substantive services that include the preparation and coordination of reports, informal working papers and background information and, as required, substantive statements, as well as legal and technical advice and assistance in facilitating the deliberative and negotiating process. At the end of 1997, technical secretariat support to the deliberative bodies was assumed by the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services (see paras. 17–18 below).

1. Conference on Disarmament

14. Members of delegations to the Conference on Disarmament, who had been Presidents, Chairpersons or Special Coordinators during the last session of the Conference were interviewed by the Central Evaluation Unit at the end of 1998; all were satisfied with the secretariat services of the Department for Disarmament Affairs. Considering that the position of President of the Conference rotates every four weeks, the representatives observed that, in fact, its secretariat is the memory of the Conference. Department staff prepare internal papers to brief upcoming Presidents on the status of issues; they share their experience on precedents and past proposals. They research, or help identify, documentation needed by the Presidents and other officers of the Conference. One former President stated to the Evaluation Unit that, during a period of intense negotiations when scores of informal consultations were held, his effectiveness had depended on the professional capacity of the secretariat and its logistical support. In particular, at the request of the President, the secretariat advised him on formulations that could achieve consensus, and drafted for him numerous alternative texts. The Secretary-General of the Conference also, as provided by the rules of procedure, and acting as personal representative of the Secretary-General, may provide some informal ideas to assist the Conference and its President in organizing the business and timetables of the Conference (rules of procedure, para. 13). Delegations told the Evaluation Unit that this practice, in addition to informal contacts, contributed to new perspectives.

15. During the period under review, the number of meetings of the Conference varied depending on the intensity of the negotiations under way, and the evolution of the international political and security environment. In 1992, there were 484 meetings, including informal meetings and consultations. In addition, 150 informal consultations were held in the Palais des Nations by delegations only. The number of meetings and consultations serviced by the substantive secretariat remained at similar levels from 1993 to 1996, when the Conference on Disarmament concluded the negotiations on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. In 1997 and 1998, the number of meetings and informal consultations decreased to less than 200 a year. Representatives commented that the secretariat's capacity was spread thin when there were intense consultations and negotiations, at which time they exercised restraint in their requests to the secretariat, although they needed, sometimes, more detailed informal documentation than was usually prepared. This capacity might not be used to its full potential in the pre-negotiation phase or between sessions. However,

[3] Ibid., *Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 6*, vol. I.

the possibilities for pre-session work are limited, as the secretariat mostly responds to needs that evolve in the course of negotiations. Staffing levels remained stable throughout the period under review; it should be noted that, before 1996, staff were regularly deployed from the Department in New York to provide additional support when meetings were held. A few representatives questioned the downgrading, in 1992, of the position of Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference.

2. Deliberative bodies

16. The 1991 in-depth evaluation of the programme by the Central Evaluation Unit indicated that the level of satisfaction with secretariat services of members of the First Committee was high; more than 80 per cent of members of the First Committee who contributed to the survey were satisfied with the services (E/AC.51/1991/2, annex I). Views expressed to the Unit by delegations, at the end of 1998, indicate that this assessment, overall, has not changed. Representatives commented on a few difficulties regarding the scheduling of meetings — overlap with other meetings, indecision about the dates of the session of the First Committee — or the annotated agenda.

3. Secretariat support by the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services

17. Among the measures announced by the Secretary-General in March 1997, as a first step in the reform process of the Organization, was the integration into the new Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services of the technical secretariat support services of the Department of Political Affairs and the former Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development; responsibility for providing substantive support to intergovernmental bodies continued to reside in the programme departments. The General Assembly noted that the newly created Department would not provide technical support services to the Fifth and Sixth Committees of the General Assembly or to the Security Council. In his 1998 report to the Assembly on the matter, the Secretary-General stated that technical and substantive servicing of the Security Council and the Fifth and Sixth Committees continued to reside in the programme departments. It is observed that the Committee secretaries participate in the weekly working-level coordination meeting convened by the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services; the meeting has proved a useful tool for horizontal contacts (A/53/452, para. 9).

18. As a consequence of the 1997 reorganization, servicing is now provided to the First Committee and the Disarmament Commission by two departments. The functions of the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services include advising delegations and Secretariat units and officials on the work of the relevant organs and bodies, and regularly providing analytical briefs to the Secretary-General on major developments in the deliberations of those bodies (ST/SGB/1997/6, para. 7.2 (f)). Substantive assessments are prepared by the Department for Disarmament Affairs and procedural assessments by the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services. The Department for Disarmament Affairs continues to provide technical and substantive servicing for meetings and conferences of treaty regimes such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, with no recourse to any assistance from the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services. This is a continuation of past practice and has been acceptable to Member States.

B. Follow-up to General Assembly resolutions and decisions

1. Preparation of documentation

(a) Deliberative bodies

19. More than a third of the reports and notes prepared, in 1998, by the Secretariat for the consideration of the First Committee were issued three weeks or less before the beginning of the session. However, most comments by representatives address not the timely processing of the documentation but its contents. The reports are requested by the General Assembly. Very few reports, other than those prepared by groups of governmental experts, contain analyses and/or recommendations. For about a quarter of the reports submitted in 1998, the General Assembly had specifically limited its requests to the Secretariat to submit for consideration by the Assembly information and views received from Member States. For other reports, formulations were broader; there were requests to report on the subject; to report on technological developments, drawing from official sources and from contributions by States; or to update and further develop one previous report. However, in most cases, the approach followed by the Secretariat remains limited to the collation of replies received from Member States, which, more often than not, contain the views of one or two countries and do not provide sufficient official material to report on the subject matter. Delegations commented to the Central Evaluation Unit that,

as in other areas of the work of the Organization, the addition of a brief overview of the issue being considered or factual account of recent developments, in the form of introduction or summary, would make a number of reports more useful.

(b) Negotiating bodies

20. The secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament assists in the preparation of the provisional agenda and the first draft of the reports of the Conference to the General Assembly but most of the documentation is requested by members as the session unfolds. In 1998, the most voluminous sets of documents were compilations on specific topics of documents of past sessions of the Conference, including papers prepared by Governments, working papers or documents prepared in the context of relevant treaty negotiations or review conferences. The compilations offer an overview of proposals and discussions which, sometimes, spread over a period of 10 years or more, and are used as reference documents by delegations, beyond the specific need of the session. Considering the demonstrated capacity of the secretariat to prepare useful background documentation, a number of representatives consider that, in relation to upcoming negotiations, and if mandated to do so, it could coordinate the preparation of background papers on technical issues or historical notes. It should be noted that the rules of procedure, in particular rule 15, provide that at the request of the Conference, the Secretary-General shall provide professional assistance to the Conference by preparing background papers and bibliographies on issues which are the subject of negotiations in the Conference as well as by compiling data and information relevant to the conduct of negotiations. In addition, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and a number of research institutions and non-governmental organizations provide useful contributions and analyses on issues relating to the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

21. In the context of other conferences of States parties to existing treaties, the preparation of technical inputs by the Department for Disarmament Affairs in the form of official documentation is rare but feasible. For example, the Preparatory Committee for the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons requested that background documentation be prepared by the Secretariat on the overall implementation of several articles of the Treaty, reflecting, *inter alia*, important political developments directly relevant. After amendments and updating requested by the Committee, the papers were submitted to the Conference.

2. Multilateral disarmament agreements

22. Mandated follow-up actions regarding the multilateral disarmament agreements were carried out under subprogramme 1 of the medium-term plan for the period 1992–1997. Activities to address the challenges arising from the implementation of relevant treaties, part of the second objective of the medium-term plan for the period 1998–2001, will be reviewed in this section also.

23. The Department for Disarmament Affairs carries out the functions deriving from the Secretary-General's role as depositary of multilateral disarmament agreements, and by request of States parties, which involves monitoring the process of the signature and ratification of those agreements. Services provided at the request of the General Assembly for review conferences and other relevant meetings are not limited to agreements for which the Secretary-General is depositary. The advocacy role of the Secretary-General, to ensure early entry into force of a treaty and, a concern frequently expressed by Member States, its universality, is carried out under specific provisions of a convention, at the request of United Nations bodies or under a broad interpretation of the Secretary-General's moral obligation, and concerns any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security under Article 99 of the Charter.

24. In most cases, the action of the Secretary-General is limited to communications to heads of State or Government appealing for their leadership in ensuring their country's signature and early ratification of a specific agreement. The Secretary-General's meetings and travels are also the occasion of consultations. Secretariat staff gave the rate of ratifications of the Chemical Weapons Convention as an example of the effectiveness of the Secretary-General's action. In 1993 and 1994, 19 States ratified the Convention; after two appeals by the Secretary-General, in 1995 and 1997, 87 additional States ratified the Convention. However, considering the dynamics of treaty ratification, the Secretary-General's action should be seen as one among several factors. The Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, opened for signature in 1981, had only 73 parties as at 15 March 1999; in contrast, by the same date, 67 States had ratified the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, one year after it was opened for signature. The Secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons stated to OIOS that, to increase further the effectiveness of the steps taken by the Secretary-General, the Department for

Disarmament Affairs could consult more closely with the relevant treaty organizations in order to receive specialized advice on the problems that States are facing in relation to treaty ratification.

25. Briefings and seminars that the Department for Disarmament Affairs organizes may promote treaty ratification. However, the resources of the Department are insufficient to pursue an overall strategy. For example, the promotion of adherence to nuclear-weapon-free zone arrangements, encouraged by Member States, would require Department staff to attend a number of regional meetings, or the Secretariat to sponsor meetings for State representatives to discuss such matters and provide technical assistance. Funds are available to support negotiations, and cover the participation of international experts, but are lacking for the promotion of ratification by the Secretariat.

26. On several occasions, the General Assembly endorsed assistance by the Secretariat, on request, to States parties to multilateral disarmament agreements in their duty to ensure the effective functioning of such agreements (resolution 31/90). The assistance of the Secretariat has been mostly limited to servicing review conferences and to facilitating the exchange of information between parties. Follow-up action on multilateral agreements is basically a governmental function. To support States parties with regard to the implementation of verification provisions and other provisions of treaties, a few dedicated bodies were established; parties have also relied on the technical services of existing specialized agencies. Collaboration between the Secretariat and the treaty organizations varies with the provisions of different treaties. Regarding the Chemical Weapons Convention, several Department staff members assisted in the establishment of the provisional technical secretariat of the Preparatory Committee for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, and in the holding of the first meeting of the States signatories. As the Convention provides that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons may refer certain matters to specific organs of the United Nations, the Secretariats of the United Nations and that organization are currently negotiating a relationship agreement. Comparable support was provided to the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization. In addition, a preparatory commission international cooperation programme is being developed to support requests for assistance and other needs, with Department advice. Under the terms of the Ottawa Convention, the United Nations and the Secretary-General would be required to play a prominent role that exceeds the traditional duties of a depositary (A/C.1/52/L.47, para. 2); different functions include, *inter alia*, the maintenance of a specialized database; the appointment of fact-finding missions; and assistance in the elaboration of domestic mine-clearance programmes.

27. The monitoring of treaty implementation follows the legal framework of each treaty and the experience gained within that framework. Difficulties in implementing specific treaties are somewhat documented but there is no comparative overview. In their 1995 report, the Group of Governmental Experts on Verification in All its Aspects noted that the nature of verification had evolved both as practical experience increased and as the verification objectives became increasingly diversified. An important lesson seemed to be that verification in each context might benefit from the experience gained and methods used in the others (A/50/377 and Corr.1, para. 204). The Group recommended, *inter alia*, that the Secretary-General encourage and facilitate the development of communication channels and other contacts among verification implementing organizations. The General Assembly encouraged Member States to consider the recommendations contained in the report and to assist the Secretary-General in their implementation where they considered it appropriate (resolution 50/61). In response to queries by the Central Evaluation Unit, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) stated that it foresaw possibilities for further cooperation with the Department for Disarmament Affairs, specifically in the context of nuclear-weapon-free zones, verification regimes, and exploring synergies between verification pertaining to weapons of mass destruction. The secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons agrees with the IAEA statement, provided that the independent status of organizations involved, and their respective rules on protection of sensitive information, are taken into account. In 1998, UNIDIR developed a project for a series of seminars with international treaty-implementing organizations in order to highlight common interests and problems, encourage ratification and implementation and promote dialogue between practitioners (A/53/187, para. 23). Implementation was initiated in 1999; to avoid duplicating work, the Department could collaborate with UNIDIR in this respect.

IV. Following and assessing current and future trends

28. The second objective of the programme for the medium-term plan for the period 1998–2001 — to follow and assess current and future trends in the field of disarmament and international security in order to assist

Member States, and to enable the Secretary-General also to assist them, in their search for agreement (General Assembly resolution 51/219, annex, programme 1, para. 1.15) — is a continuation of subprogramme 3, Monitoring, analysis and studies, of the medium-term plan for the period 1992–1997.

A. Studies

1. Studies by the Department for Disarmament Affairs

29. In the Final Document of its first special session devoted to disarmament, the General Assembly considered that taking further steps in the field of disarmament and other measures aimed at promoting international peace and security would be facilitated by carrying out studies by the Secretary-General in this field with appropriate assistance from governmental or consultant experts (resolution S-10/2, para. 96). The Secretary-General was requested to set up an advisory board of eminent persons, to advise him on various aspects of these studies (see paras. 35–37 below). The Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters identified three purposes for studies mandated by the General Assembly, namely, to assist in ongoing negotiations; to identify possible new areas of negotiation; and to promote public awareness of the problems involved in the arms race and disarmament (A/42/300, para. 5).

30. In 1987, the Board commented that as studies had evolved, the exercises had changed somewhat in nature. There might have been a trend in the mandates from the General Assembly towards the appointment of governmental rather than consultant participating experts. That tendency had been of value in that the studies had thus often reflected authoritative views and, when a consensus had been reached on substance, the studies might have indicated an opening towards genuine negotiations (A/42/300, paras. 3 and 8–10). The evolution identified in that report was even more pronounced in the 1990s. The studies are almost exclusively an input into the work of the deliberative bodies. In general, the recommendations they contain are endorsed by the General Assembly. The Member States are called upon, and the Secretary-General requested, to implement the relevant recommendations. The involvement of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, in the preparation of the studies, falls under "servicing of intergovernmental and expert bodies" (A/52/6/Rev.1,[4] para. 2.128). For example, in 1997, the Centre for Disarmament Affairs provided the following support to the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms: preparing an annotated bibliographical survey of publications and supplying documents requested by the experts; liaising with reputed scholars making presentations before the Panel; planning and organizing workshops; and drafting sections of the report. Since 1980, the number of studies mandated by the General Assembly has decreased steadily. There were 23 studies during the period 1980–1985; 12 in 1986–1991; and 5 in 1992–1997. Several factors are cited to explain this decrease besides the political process of which the studies are part. One of them is the cost of such exercises under the present format, another is the establishment of UNIDIR which provides opportunities for other ways of carrying out disarmament studies and research.

31. The need for another kind of study by the Department for Disarmament Affairs continues. For example, at its fifty-second session, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to initiate a study on the problems of ammunition and explosives in all their aspects, as early as possible, within available financial resources, and in cooperation with appropriate international and regional organizations where necessary (resolution 52/38 J). The study is carried out by the Department at a minimal cost, with the participation of UNIDIR. Delegations and representatives of other organizations provided to the Central Evaluation Unit multiple suggestions of topics for study. The small number of studies and expert reports the Department prepares, for the Secretary-General and the General Assembly, are generally commissioned from consultants and experts hired for the occasion. In that respect, it should be recalled that, at its first special session devoted to disarmament, the Assembly considered that the Centre for Disarmament should take account fully of the possibilities offered by specialized agencies and other institutions and programmes within the United Nations system with regard to studies and information on disarmament, and should also increase contacts with non-governmental organizations and research institutions in view of the valuable role they play in the field of disarmament (resolution S-10/2, para. 123).

2. Role of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research

32. The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research is an autonomous institution within the framework of the United Nations, established — through interim arrangements in 1979, and formally in 1984 — by the General Assembly for the purpose of undertaking independent research on disarmament and related problems, particularly international security issues, and working in close relationship with the Department for Disarmament

[4] Ibid., *Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 6*, vol. I.

Affairs (resolution 39/148 H, annex, statute of UNIDIR, article I). One of the purposes of such work — assisting ongoing negotiations by means of objective and factual studies and analyses (ibid., article II) — contributes to the work of the Conference on Disarmament. Topics taken up by UNIDIR are policy relevant. The UNIDIR research programme for 1998–1999 comprises four main headings, namely, collective security in the framework of the United Nations; regional security; non-proliferation; and the fourth special session devoted to disarmament. UNIDIR contributes to networks of research institutes in several regional contexts, which are particularly useful in exploring issues when only non-governmental (track II) deliberations can be conducted. With regard to the work of the Conference on Disarmament, UNIDIR may help sort out the questions involved and provide factual material for subsequent consideration. This was the case with the issue of nuclear fissile material, a subject of UNIDIR papers and seminars since 1994. In addition, UNIDIR helps to inform a wider public about issues being negotiated, through, *inter alia*, its *Newsletter* — now renamed *Disarmament Forum*. In 1998, UNIDIR launched a series of informal "discussion meetings" on the future of the Conference on Disarmament, to encourage open dialogue in an informal setting. UNIDIR participates in another discussion series, the Geneva Forum, which seeks to act as a bridge between the international research community and Geneva-based diplomats and journalists; there are about six annual meetings. During the last annual reporting period, UNIDIR published seven research reports, not including its briefs and *Newsletter*. In June 1998, there were 13 ongoing projects, and 8 projects in development.

33. The Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters serves as the Board of Trustees of UNIDIR; the UNIDIR research programme is approved by the Board, duly taking into account the recommendations of the General Assembly (resolution 37/99 K, sect. IV). Members of the Board stated to the Central Evaluation Unit that, until now, in their functions as Trustees, they had not been effective in assisting UNIDIR in making decisions on the future orientation of its programme or raising funds for its activities. In the mid-1990s, the collaboration with the Department for Disarmament Affairs was not as close as desirable. [*In response, the Department stated to OIOS that it "did review the UNIDIR programme of work on a regular basis. Even when similar subjects were addressed by both the Department and UNIDIR, different aspects were considered or different approaches, in line with the respective mandates of the two offices, were used."*] In spite of UNIDIR's unique relation to the Conference on Disarmament, it does not enjoy the status of observer at the Conference. [*In response, the Department stated to OIOS: "the rules of procedure of the Conference on Disarmament have no provisions for granting observer status to any organizations; observer status is only envisaged for Member States, that so request. UNIDIR cannot also be considered as part of the Secretariat."*] After the nomination of the new Director of UNIDIR, in 1997, the collaboration with the Department made a new start and UNIDIR increased its support to delegations to the Conference, regarding current developments. Expert meetings organized by UNIDIR are now more cost-effective and are designed to address specific needs. The direction given to the UNIDIR programme by the new Director received strong support from the main donors, and her fund-raising campaigns have been successful. The estimated total income of the Institute for 1998 is $1.5 million, an increase of over $0.8 million compared to the initial estimates.

34. UNIDIR activities are funded by voluntary contributions, which mainly cover costs associated with the organization of seminars, publications and the appointment of senior fellows, consultants and correspondents to carry out or advise on studies and research. A subvention towards meeting the costs of the Director and the staff of the Institute is provided from the regular budget of the United Nations. The regular budget subvention had been maintained at $220,000 yearly since 1990, and was reduced to $213,000 in 1996, owing to system-wide reductions. The Board of Trustees has requested a restoration of the $220,000 subvention and that it be adjusted for inflation. The subvention originally covered the cost of three posts and currently covers only two. A number of long-term core staff have been paid over the years by one-month to one-year contracts, with no provision for medical insurance or pension contributions. In the present funding situation, if staff were placed on regular United Nations contracts, not all core staff could be retained and UNIDIR would not function.

3. Role of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters

35. The functions of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, established in 1978, are (a) to advise the Secretary-General on various aspects of studies and research in the area of arms limitation and disarmament; (b) to serve as the Board of Trustees of UNIDIR; (c) to advise the Secretary-General on the implementation of the World Disarmament Campaign; and (d) at the invitation of the Secretary-General, to provide him with advice on other matters within this area (General Assembly resolution 37/99 K, sect. III). Only functions (b) to (d) are still clearly relevant.

36. The question of the Board's role and of its working methods has frequently been the subject of discussion. In 1994, the Board agreed with the Secretary-General that it would not rely entirely on requests for advice by him but would be proactive in making suggestions and bringing issues to his attention (see A/49/360, para. 14). The Secretary-General welcomed the intention of members of the Board to work between sessions in subgroups. In 1998, to improve its effectiveness, it was suggested that the Board take a more proactive and result-oriented approach by formulating its advice in terms of specific recommendations to the Secretary-General. Board members agreed to take more advantage of the new communications potential to remain in contact with each other, the Chairman, the Department for Disarmament Affairs and UNIDIR with a view to sharing their opinions on important relevant developments. It was suggested once again that Board members serve, as appropriate, on various United Nations missions and assignments, and members also agreed that they could serve as links between the Department and academic institutions and other organizations (see A/53/222, paras. 38–45).

37. In recent years, efforts were made to ensure the membership of the Board would include a wide range of expertise. The Board has access to the Secretary-General and to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs but, in the past, the independent expertise of its members has been largely untapped. The Board does not operate to produce one collective view; it rather explores, in open discussion, areas to test where consensus could emerge at a later date. Board meetings do not represent the conclusion of an annual programme of research to develop proposals on a set of issues. The Department normally supplies the Board members with a well-prepared annotated agenda and reading materials before each session. However, this interaction takes place just before the meetings and does not have the desirable continuity. Board members noted that, since 1998, they were more regularly informed of Department activities. In response to comments by former Board members to the effect that the Department should submit to the Board concrete suggestions on contributions expected from it, as from 1998 the Department has formulated specific questions for the Board's advice.

B. Disarmament databases

38. The provision of a well-researched database on new trends and developments — under subprogramme 3 of the medium-term plan for the period 1992–1997 — was primarily meant to enable the Secretary-General to assist Member States. The Department for Disarmament Affairs is currently keeping up to date a number of country profiles, based on documentation both official and in the public domain, which summarize relevant legislative actions, positions taken on key disarmament issues and United Nations resolutions. They also contain the data submitted by Governments to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. They enable Department officers to prepare on short notice briefing notes for the attention of the Secretary-General, to ensure that disarmament issues are adequately reflected in his consultations with Member States. There are also topical databases, such as the database being developed on weapons of mass destruction, to assist States parties to multilateral disarmament agreements.

39. The involvement of the Department for Disarmament Affairs in the collection of official data on armaments began in 1980, when it compiled information received from Governments on their military expenditures. In 1992, a new instrument, the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, was established. From the perspective of the Department, these instruments are in fact confidence-building measures (see paras. 42–46 below). From the perspective of officers in other departments, the data contained in the Department's databases should be operationally useful. Frequently, when demobilization and disarmament are components of the mandates of United Nations peacekeeping operations, comprehensive disarmament programmes are not achieved, for a variety of reasons, including the fact, as in Mozambique during the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique, that nobody knew how many weapons were in circulation.[5] Some offices in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs commented to the Central Evaluation Unit that it would be helpful if the Department developed profiles of armament for countries in crisis. However, it was observed that setting up such a database is labour-intensive; arms accumulations evolve rapidly and, at the end of the day, the Department may provide information not noticeably different from that published by non-governmental organizations.

40. In the early 1980s, the Department was mandated by the General Assembly to report on nuclear capability in South Africa and Israel; at that time, it used information available within the Organization and provided estimates which proved to have a good degree of accuracy. One

[5] UNIDIR, "Small arms management and peacekeeping in southern Africa" (1996).

participant in the United Nations advisory mission to Mali (see para. 56 below) commented to the Central Evaluation Unit that the information he needed for the mission was not available in the Department, although it existed in different parts of the United Nations system. Access to existing information is sometimes difficult. The Department for Disarmament Affairs confirmed that it has difficult access to country profiles and other information in the Departments of Political Affairs and Peacekeeping Operations; a joint databank or other arrangements for closer collaboration would be useful, especially to obtain first-hand information from field missions. Moreover, the status of information exchanged between members of other intergovernmental organizations is unclear, as is what use the Department can make of it. For example, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has been developing a global exchange of military information; OSCE participating States have been implementing this annual exchange since its adoption on 3 December 1994. In 1998, the Department decided that, as part of the United Nations mechanism for Coordinating Action on Small Arms, information on the categories, quantities and transfers of small arms forwarded to the Department by United Nations agencies and other departments will be stored in a database. The regular upgrading of electronic equipment and application at Headquarters is improving the access to information of the Department's staff. Comparable investments were not made at Geneva, where Department staff cannot have easy access to Department databases in New York, let alone access to external sources. In the future, upgrading of electronic equipment and application should be done simultaneously in New York and Geneva, through joint action of the New York and Geneva technical services.

V. Support for, and promotion of, regional disarmament efforts and initiatives

41. The third objective of the medium-term plan for the period 1998–2001 is to support and promote regional disarmament efforts and initiatives using approaches freely arrived at among the States of the region. This was the main objective of subprogramme 4 of the medium-term plan for the period 1992–1997, which focused primarily on services provided for the benefit of the developing countries. The subprogramme included the work of the regional centres and the fellowship programme, activities which will be reviewed in this section.

A. Confidence-building measures

42. In 1992, the General Assembly, stressing the need to encourage Member States and regional arrangements and organizations to play a leading role in developing confidence-building measures, commended such measures as the promotion of openness and restraint in the production, procurement and deployment of armaments (resolution 47/120 A, sect. IV). The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms was established in 1992, and is maintained centrally by the Department for Disarmament Affairs, pursuant to the request of the General Assembly, recognizing that an increased level of transparency in the field of armaments would enhance confidence (resolution 46/36 L). The Assembly called upon Member States to provide annually for the Register data on imports and exports of seven categories of conventional arms. The panel of governmental technical experts, convened in 1992, which assisted in defining the modalities of reporting to the Register, and the groups of governmental experts convened in 1994 and 1997, discussed the operation of the Register and modalities for the expansion of its scope.

43. Regarding participation, the 1997 Group of Experts was encouraged to note that the level of participation remained one of the highest compared with similar international reporting instruments (A/52/316, para. 11). Every year over 90 Governments regularly submit reports; 138 Governments have participated at least once by reporting. However, the Group was concerned that the goal of universal participation had not yet been reached and noted that the level of reporting varied from region to region — 15 per cent of States reporting from one region, 100 per cent from another. The Group of Experts considered that non-participation in the Register might be due to political and technical reasons, and that some States might not be convinced that the Register alone was relevant to their security concerns (ibid., para. 17). The Group noted the importance of the role of the Secretariat in giving advice to Member States, when requested, on technical aspects of completing reports (ibid., para. 52). It commended the Centre for Disarmament Affairs for its efforts to organize and participate in a number of regional workshops. There is no clear indication that the level of reporting was influenced by the workshops, although it is observed that they provided useful information to reporting Governments and may have played a role in related initiatives taken by regional arrangements and agencies. In 1996, members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum agreed to circulate to each other their reports to the Register at the time they were submitted. The same year, the

General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS) requested members to send their submissions to the Register also to the Secretary-General of OAS. For its part, OSCE made information exchange on the Register submissions obligatory between its members. The Group of Experts recommended that the Secretariat enhance the information on the Register and, when requested, support regional efforts. In 1998, the Department for Disarmament Affairs published an information booklet on all aspects of the operation of the Register; Member States have access to the computerized data contained in the Register, and the consolidated annual report is issued as a General Assembly document.

44. To enhance the effectiveness of this tool, consideration was given to regional (or subregional) adaptation to complement the Register. For example, in 1995, delegations to the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa (see para. 51 below) considered that the Register in its present form was too restrictive in the categories of weapons with which it is concerned and that the establishment of a subregional arms register that would take into account data such as force levels and light weapons would be a valid contribution to the existing Register (A/50/474, para. 11). The Organization of African Unity (OAU) decided to develop a regional register; OAU staff stated to the Central Evaluation Unit that Department support would be useful to implement this initiative.

45. In contrast to the Register, participation in the United Nations system of standardized reporting of military expenditures, established in 1980 as a means to increase confidence between States, in the move towards agreed and balanced reductions in military expenditures (General Assembly resolution 35/142 B), remained much lower — 27 Member States reporting in 1998 — although General Assembly resolutions on it are adopted by consensus. In 1997, the General Assembly endorsed the intention of the Secretary-General to resume consultations with relevant international and regional organizations receiving reports on military expenditures, with a view to ascertaining the requirements for adjusting the reporting instrument to encourage wider participation (resolution 52/32). Five major recommendations emerged from consultations in 1998, including raising the profile of the reporting instrument, eliminating technical impediments to participation in the system, and enhancing the complementarity of and cooperation among the different international and regional reporting instruments. The General Assembly recommended the guidelines and recommendations for objective information on military matters to all Member States for implementation, fully taking into account specific conditions prevailing in a region (resolution 53/72).

46. In its response to queries by the Central Evaluation Unit, OSCE stated that it found the consultations very useful since the organization's participating States had agreed upon a mandatory information exchange on military expenditures in the framework of the Vienna Document 1994 (see paras. 40 and 43 above). Many non-NATO OSCE participating States have joined the NATO Partnership for Peace programme and a large percentage of these have decided to participate in the Partnership for Peace planning and review process which, *inter alia*, seeks information on defence expenditures. In its response to queries by the Central Evaluation Unit, NATO recalled that a number of member countries observed that reporting of this information to both organizations required a duplication of effort.

B. Cooperating with regional organizations

47. In 1993, the General Assembly endorsed the guidelines and recommendations for regional approaches to disarmament within the context of global security adopted by the Disarmament Commission. The guidelines recommended, *inter alia*, that the United Nations seek to promote complementarity between regional and global processes of disarmament by establishing effective liaison and cooperation with relevant regional bodies (A/48/42,[6] annex II, para. 51). Instances of collaboration are appreciated by regional organizations. In the Asia and Pacific region, the secretariat of the ASEAN Regional Forum organized a seminar in 1997 on nuclear issues. The Department for Disarmament Affairs contributed to the seminar, and was also helpful in facilitating the participation of the Forum secretariat in meetings of the Preparatory Committee and the review conference of the parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. However, in general, collaboration with regional organizations has not been established, or is not as sustained as it should. The Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) has special cooperation agreements with organizations such as IAEA, and it has carried out activities with a number of them, including IAEA and UNIDIR. No agreement was concluded between the Department for Disarmament Affairs and OPANAL for cooperation and information exchange purposes. OPANAL stated to OIOS that it is interested in concluding such agreement during

[6] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-Eighth Session, Supplement No. 42.*

1999. OAU interest in disarmament is linked to a number of issues such as the proliferation of small arms, landmines and demobilization, and implementation of disarmament treaties. OAU officers commented to the Central Evaluation Unit that Department support would be useful, in particular to facilitate the exchange of experience and information with other regions, including Governments and organizations involved in the implementation of nuclear-weapon-free zone agreements. However, they observed that modalities for collaboration with the Department, in the context of the guidelines adopted by the Commission in 1993, have not been defined. The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, set up at the request of the heads of State and Government of OAU, is expected to provide technical assistance to both the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution and the security mechanisms of subregional organizations. The 1997 joint mission of the Department of Political Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to review the role of the Centre observed that its Director should be someone who could work in close collaboration and consultation with OAU. The OAU officers consulted at the time of the joint mission had not been informed, by the end of 1998, of measures taken for the revitalization of the Centre.

C. Regional centres

48. The three United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean were established to seek to promote relations based on mutual confidence and security between the countries of the respective regions in a spirit of solidarity and cooperation for the implementation of measures for peace and disarmament (revised medium-term plan for the period 1992–1997 (A/47/6/Rev. 1,[7] para. 7.50)).

49. The activities of the Regional Centre in Asia and the Pacific focused on the organization of regional meetings, one of them being organized every year since 1988 at Kathmandu. The regional dialogue promoted by the Centre through the annual meetings is known as the "Kathmandu process". The continuation of this process as a means of identifying pressing disarmament and security issues and exploring region-oriented solutions has gained the strong support of Member States and academic groups within the region. The fact that, in 1997 and 1998, the Director of the Centre was invited to 11 conferences and meetings sponsored by Governments and non-governmental organizations, at the expense of the sponsors, provides an indication of the interest in the work of the Centre.

50. Government representatives consulted by the Centre, in 1997, concluded, *inter alia*, that it should more widely publicize its activities not only in the region but across the world, and that as part of its efforts to widen its discussions to non-state actors the Centre should establish a web of relationships with other relevant organizations. Proceedings of the meetings are published which contribute to the dissemination of in-depth analyses. On increasing the visibility of the work of the Centre, suggestions were made such as designing a broader mailing list, reaching policy makers and think-tank organizations, or organizing joint meetings with relevant organizations.

51. The Regional Centre in Africa, at Lome, after its establishment in 1986, launched a number of initiatives in research and training, in addition to participating in the World Disarmament Campaign through seminars and the publication of a quarterly newsletter. Since 1990, the Centre has increasingly limited its activities to routine information tasks. Among its earlier initiatives, in 1988, the Centre provided support to the Economic Community of Central African States conference on the promotion of confidence, security and development in Central Africa. Participants in a follow-up seminar, in 1991, recommended, *inter alia*, the creation under United Nations auspices of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. Since the establishment of that Committee in 1992, a number of related activities would have been relevant to the mandate of the Centre; however, it lacked the capability to contribute meaningfully to the work of the Committee. After 1992, voluntary contributions to the Centre decreased sharply, and the post of Director remained vacant from 1992 until 1998. The 1997 Department of Political Affairs/UNDP mission (see para. 47 above) concluded that there was a broad consensus that the Centre ought to operate as a small coordinating unit for research, training and information dissemination on conflicts, peace-building and the non-proliferation of arms and landmines in Africa and that the Centre should be revitalized.

52. The Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), in October 1998, declared a moratorium on the importation, exportation and manufacture of small arms and light weapons in West Africa (see A/53/763–S/1998/1194). The Organization of African Unity and the United Nations were called upon to ensure the adoption of similar steps in other regions of Africa. At the end of 1998, UNDP launched a project to work with Governments, organizations such as OAU and

[7] Ibid., *Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 6*, vol. I.

ECOWAS, non-governmental organizations and weapons suppliers in backstopping the implementation of the moratorium. UNDP decided that the Lome Centre — the existing international structure mandated to promote disarmament initiatives in the region — would serve as the lead agency for the project.

53. The activities of the Centre in Latin America and the Caribbean, at Lima, have never attracted an adequate level of voluntary contributions; they were limited to a few seminars attended by experts, routine information tasks and the publication of a quarterly newsletter. Following the resignation of the Director in 1993, the post remained vacant until 1998. In 1996, owing to the lack of sufficient voluntary contributions to maintain even a minimal activity, the Secretary-General decided to suspend the operations of the Centre. Since then several Governments have indicated their interest in reactivating the Centre, and a number of organizations, including UNDP, OAS and several research institutes have stated that, should the Centre be reactivated, there might be areas of common interest and activity. In 1998, OPANAL explored the possibilities of planning for 1999 a seminar on disarmament issues relevant to the region, organized jointly with the Lima Centre and the Peruvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Government of Peru responded positively to this initiative.

54. With the exception of the posts of Director, to be financed from the regular budget, voluntary contributions were envisaged as the source of financing of the Centres. The Secretary-General reported in 1995 that the voluntary contributions on which the centres depended primarily for their operations had dwindled over the years, and the financial situation of the regional centres had become precarious resulting in drastically curtailed activities (A/C.5/50/33, para. 14). The most seriously affected were the Lome and Lima Centres. The Kathmandu Centre is affected by limited contributions to cover its administrative and related costs, while it attracts levels of voluntary resources that are sufficient to enable it to carry out valuable work (A/52/309/Add.1 and Corr.1, annex III). In 1997, the General Assembly decided to retain the three P-5 posts of the Directors of the regional centres, which had been proposed for abolition, requested the Secretary-General to fill those posts in the shortest possible time, and invited Member States to support the centres (resolution 52/220, section III, para. 26). The posts were filled in 1998. Several representatives of organizations familiar with the work of the centres stressed that the new Directors should define a plan of action relevant to their regions and congruent with expected resources, a strategy adopted by the Kathmandu Centre, which explains its relative success.

Income of the disarmament trust funds for the United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament
(Thousands of dollars)

Centres	*1990–1991*	*1992–1993*	*1994–1995*	*1996–1997*
Africa	771.9	427.6	141.9	73.0
Asia and the Pacific	138.5	644.5[a]	204.9	164.6
Latin America and the Caribbean	65.9	190.1[b]	81.4	29.5

[a] One-time donation of $500,000 for construction of a centre at Kathmandu; returned to the donor in 1997 upon its request.

[b] Including funds for a seminar organized at Asunción in January 1993.

D. Integrated approach to peace and security

55. The Charter of the United Nations envisages disarmament and the regulation of armaments as elements in the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources (Article 26). In 1989, the General Assembly recalled the principles of the Charter and linked the maintenance of peace and security with resolving international problems of a political, economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character (resolution 44/21). The Department for Disarmament Affairs is expected to contribute to an integrated approach to issues relating to the maintenance of peace and security (resolution 51/219, annex, programme 1, para. 1.19).

56. An integrated and proportional approach to security and development was adopted by the Secretary-General in 1995 when he dispatched an advisory mission to the Sahara-Sahel region, with the support of seven States of the region, with a view to assisting those States in their efforts to combat and stem the illicit flow of light weapons within and across their borders (A/50/1, para. 957). In 1997 the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms recommended that such an approach be extended to other regions of the world where conflicts come to an end. The Department for Disarmament Affairs provided support to the deliberative bodies and Member States to review, with consideration given to a more integrated approach to practical disarmament measures, the experience gained in conflict resolution. In this regard, concerned Member States have established an open-ended group of interested States in practical disarmament measures that, with the technical and substantive assistance of the Department, provides political

and financial support to concrete measures of practical disarmament. In order to facilitate this work, the Department has established a Trust Fund for Consolidation of Peace through Practical Disarmament Measures, which receives voluntary financial contributions from Member States to assist in this kind of project. In his 1998 report to the Security Council on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871–S/1998/318) the Secretary-General also emphasized the need for such an approach.

57. An integrated approach means both the integration in substance, such as disarmament and development, or disarmament and security and peace, and of actors, such as the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the Departments of Political Affairs and Peacekeeping Operations, UNDP and UNIDIR. Regarding the implementation of the action programme adopted by the 1987 International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, no major initiatives — besides a number of studies by several organizations, such as the International Labour Organization on the employment impact of disarmament — were reported. In 1998, it was decided to replace the high-level interdepartmental task force established after the Conference with a high-level steering group on disarmament and development, with the participation of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and UNDP. Early in 1998, the request to the Secretary-General by the Government of Albania for expert assessment provided the Department for Disarmament Affairs with the second opportunity, after the Sahara-Sahel region, to develop an integrated approach to disarmament and development, linking the disarming of civilians with a package containing community development projects. This approach could be used in countries facing the problem of demobilization of former combatants.

58. In 1997, coordination mechanisms within the United Nations system were enhanced. The Executive Committee on Peace and Security has been useful in ensuring that the disarmament dimension was adequately reflected in a number of situations. In the case of multidimensional peacekeeping operations and political missions, interdepartmental working groups, chaired by the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Political Affairs respectively, provide a vehicle for coordinating all interested entities within the United Nations system at the working level. Normally, representatives of the two Departments brief the Security Council on situations of interest to the Council. The Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs was given the lead to coordinate the Secretariat response in one situation where disarmament was the prevalent issue. The Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs does not sit in the Executive Committee on the United Nations Development Group but joint meetings are held in case of cross-over activities, in which issues such as post-conflict rehabilitation are discussed. The launching, in August 1998, of the mechanism for Coordinating Action on Small Arms, with the designation of the Department for Disarmament Affairs as the focal point for all action on small arms within the United Nations system, was an important step towards mutual consultation and exchange of information, involving a large number of programmes, including programmes dealing primarily with development issues. Wider collaboration was initiated with organizations, such as Interpol, interested in developing partnerships to address the problem of trafficking in firearms and explosives.

59. The mainstreaming of gender issues is another aspect of such integration. As stated in the Beijing Platform for Action, the full participation of women in power structures and their full involvement in all efforts for the prevention and resolution of conflicts are essential for the maintenance and promotion of peace.[8] Women now occupy senior positions in both the Department for Disarmament Affairs and UNIDIR. In 1999, a woman was appointed Chair of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters. In responding to queries by the Central Evaluation Unit, the Director of the New York office of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom stated that beyond women's participation in the structures of the United Nations, nurturing the articulation and sympathy for a gender perspective is another level of commitment, which the United Nations system is just beginning to embrace, for example through such projects as Rebuilding War-Torn Societies, of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) at Geneva.

E. Fellowship programme

60. The two objectives of the fellowship programme, launched in 1978, were to contribute (a) to the training and specialization of national officials, particularly those from developing countries, and (b) to enable them to participate more effectively in international deliberating and negotiating forums, and also to provide expertise at the national level.

[8] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II, para.134.

The programme was originally a six-month course; after 1988, owing to budgetary constraints, it was gradually reduced to a course of 10 to 12 weeks. The last major reduction, in 1992, was presented as the result of a streamlining of the programme, without compromising its quality (A/47/568). This reduction permitted an increase in the number of fellows from 25 to 30 per year. Since 1997, the number of fellowships has been reduced to 25.

61. The programme includes lectures, simulation exercises and the preparation of individual research papers. In recent years, typically, fellows observed the proceedings of the Conference on Disarmament and the First Committee, and participated in study visits to IAEA and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Organization, at Vienna, and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, at The Hague, as well as to Germany and Japan at their invitation. Former fellows commented to the Central Evaluation Unit that the shorter duration of the programme did not reduce its effectiveness. It should be noted that the fellows now have, in general, a good knowledge of disarmament issues, and that the programme can focus on the work of the multilateral bodies. Former fellows believe that more time should be allotted to activities such as simulations or discussion time following lectures. The programme might be compromised if, owing to such factors as the calendar of meetings, its duration is further reduced. Many fellows observed that additional country visits, if possible in different regional groups, should be offered as they provide invaluable insight into different national disarmament perspectives. Former fellows stressed that one of the most valuable features of the programme was the diversity of participants, which reflected that of the membership of disarmament bodies. The disarmament fellowship programme is the most successful United Nations training programme reviewed by the Central Evaluation Unit.

62. Including the 1998 programme, 475 government officials from over 140 Member States have received training under the programme since its inception. An examination of the list of delegations to the disarmament bodies, since 1996, shows that between 10 and 20 representatives of States are former fellows. At the end of 1998, a sample of sponsoring Governments responding to a survey by the Central Evaluation Unit provided information on the current assignments of former fellows; in most cases assignments were still connected to disarmament-related issues. The findings of the Unit's 1991 in-depth evaluation were comparable. The composition of the groups generally follows the guidelines established for the programme; additional guidelines may be needed to reflect mandates such as gender balance. Women's participation varies: of 24 fellows in 1997, 10 were women; in 1998, there were only 4 women. Governments should be encouraged to nominate qualified women to the programme. It is noted that stipends granted to the fellows are clearly insufficient to cover the costs of lodging and subsistence; this is particularly pronounced in locations where fellows do not stay for long periods, such as The Hague, and where special arrangements cannot be made. The Department for Disarmament Affairs should assess the situation and propose corrective measures, taking into account existing regulations.

VI. Information

63. In the Final Document of its first special session devoted to disarmament, the General Assembly stressed the importance of information activities to mobilize world public opinion, to encourage study and research and to avoid dissemination of false and tendentious information. It was recommended that throughout this process of disseminating information about developments in the disarmament field of all countries, there should be increased participation by non-governmental organizations concerned with the matter, through closer liaison between them and the United Nations (resolution S-10/2, paras. 99 and 103–105).

64. The function of disseminating information on disarmament issues was formalized in 1982 at the second special session. The World Disarmament Campaign was then launched to promote global information and education on these issues; it focused on elected representatives, research institutes, educational communities, non-governmental organizations and the media. In 1992, the Secretary-General stated that, as a result of the changed international environment, during the past few years, the Secretariat had adjusted its information programme to allow for a more pointed approach as regards the role of the United Nations in international peace and security (A/47/469, para. 6). The name of the Campaign was changed to the Disarmament Information Programme. The two most recent medium-term plans maintain the approach envisaged at the first special session to provide, on one hand, information to specialized groups in governmental and non-governmental sectors and, on the other hand, to inform a public less well-versed in disarmament matters (A/47/6/Rev.1,[7] para. 7.32). The programme is expected to facilitate the exchange of ideas between governmental and non-governmental sectors. (General Assembly resolution 51/219, annex, programme 1, new para. 1.19).

Income of the disarmament trust fund for the United Nations Disarmament Information Programme

(Thousands of dollars)

1990–1991	*1992–1993*	*1994–1995*	*1996–1997*
2 661.6	681.1	257.0	387.9

A. Publications

65. In 1992, six recurrent publications, of various periodicity, constituted the core of the information programme. Owing to the continuing decline in voluntary contributions and a number of cost-efficiency measures, the number of publications was gradually reduced. The Disarmament Study Series, the Topical Papers and the *Disarmament Newsletter* were discontinued. All Government and non-governmental organization representatives interviewed by the Central Evaluation Unit, although they understood the financial constraints, regretted this trend. They appreciated the discussion of issues by experts and the overview of new developments on specific topics presented with the objectivity and balance expected from the Organization. The quarterly publication *Disarmament: A Periodic Review by the United Nations*, was discontinued in 1998; the intention is to replace it with the publication of occasional papers — reproduction of outstanding papers presented at various conferences.

66. The two remaining publications, *The United Nations Disarmament Yearbook* and the *Status of Multilateral Arms Regulation and Disarmament Agreements*, are appreciated by the users as reference tools. *The United Nations Disarmament Yearbook*, first published in 1976, is focused on the review of the main developments and negotiations in the field of disarmament and arms regulation. Although representatives regularly consult a number of other publications, such as the *Yearbook of World Armaments and Disarmament* of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the following comment made to the Central Evaluation Unit by a representative in the First Committee encapsulates a common experience: "The *Yearbook* served as an important backgrounder. In fact, whenever there were factual disagreements between delegations in informal meetings, the *Yearbook* would be consulted". The 1997 edition of the *Yearbook* was issued in July 1998, and did not reach missions at Geneva until October 1998. Representatives commented that it would be useful to receive the *Yearbook* as early as possible in the year. This is not impossible but publication is sometimes delayed because staff of the Department for Disarmament Affairs responsible for drafting sections of the *Yearbook* are engaged in priority activities, such as the servicing of a negotiating body. Moreover, the distribution of publications by the Department, in general, became problematic after reduction of personnel in 1996. For example, the transcripts of the 1997 non-governmental organization/Department forums had not yet been distributed at the end of 1998. The maintenance of mailing lists was also affected.

67. In its 1991 in-depth evaluation, the Central Evaluation Unit recommended that the Department for Disarmament Affairs periodically utilize feedback mechanisms to determine the use being made of publications and services it provides and to elicit suggestions for improvements. During the period under review two readership surveys were conducted. Comments on the publications were generally positive but could not be the basis for improvements. In particular the number of responses received, 10 per cent of the questionnaires distributed for the *Yearbook* — although this is considered a good rate by publishing industry standards — was not sufficiently representative. The matter was discussed at the July 1998 meeting of the Secretariat Publications Board; members of the Board expressed doubts about the effectiveness of this type of broad survey. The Sales and Marketing Section of the Department of Public Information agreed to work with the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs on a pilot project to obtain concrete and targeted comments from the appropriate user groups.

68. In addition to the need for technical studies mentioned in paragraph 32 above, comments made by representatives to the Central Evaluation Unit covered needs for information that appears to be available but is not necessarily consolidated or published. For example, many representatives, mostly at Geneva, stated that, when they do not participate in the work of the First Committee, they have difficulties in assessing the work of the General Assembly session just completed. Suggestions by representatives to the Conference on Disarmament included highlighting new wording in the case of "repeat" resolutions, charting relations between resolutions, and indicating difficult points in the deliberations, all this being needed at the beginning of the session of the Conference, in January. A certain amount of information can be found in other documents, and on the Department for Disarmament Affairs website. For example, the entry "Disarmament resolutions and decisions of the ___ session of the United Nations General Assembly", available on the Department's home page from the beginning of January, provides information on the sponsorship and voting patterns of the resolutions adopted in December. The

Department's database on the activities of the First Committee, which contains texts of resolutions and decisions and information on sponsorship and voting patterns since the fifty-second session, is also available on the home page. However, the number of comments made points to the need to review the way in which information is presented or disseminated by the United Nations.

69. Comments on other topics pointed to the same difficulty of accessing existing information. At Geneva, delegations stated that they did not have a clear idea of the new initiatives promoted by the Department in New York. Also at Geneva, non-governmental organization representatives mentioned that they had been informed of initiatives such as the mechanism for Coordinating Action on Small Arms through other non-governmental organizations, not by the Department. In view of the lack of resources to support an effective publication programme, the Department is placing an increasing amount of information on its website. Although such dissemination cannot replace the need for publications, there is a demand for it. For example, in its submission to the Central Evaluation Unit, one intergovernmental organization in the Asia and Pacific region suggested that the Department for Disarmament Affairs home page include agendas for meetings the Department is responsible for and relevant papers as soon as practicable. This would assist such organizations in deciding whether or not to attend meetings and how to prepare for meetings. Where papers are sent by mail, they often arrive too late. To facilitate access to a larger amount of quality information, several representatives of research institutions and non-governmental organizations suggested to the Evaluation Unit that, short of playing the role of a clearing house which would be labour-intensive and politically sensitive, the Department could expand its practice of drafting annotated bibliographies by preparing an annotated list of the Internet sites of a number of reputable research institutions. Annotations would consist mainly of a description of the contents of the different sites. A similar suggestion was made regarding information on United Nations publications and information services to help users not familiar with the resources, and looking for information on specific subjects. The two disarmament reference libraries could respond to a number of these needs.

B. Reference libraries

70. Delegations appreciate having access to the documents of the deliberative and negotiating bodies in the New York and Geneva disarmament reference libraries. They observed that the Geneva library is the only one, worldwide, to maintain comprehensive holdings of documents of the Conference on Disarmament and review conferences of existing multilateral disarmament treaties. The two librarians offer guidance or prepare responses to queries in relation to these collections. However, the function of a specialized documentation centre has not been sufficiently developed. Delegations would like the librarians to offer guidance on how to access information on scientific and technical aspects of disarmament not necessarily reflected in the United Nations documentation. They should be able to point to existing documentation available at the United Nations or through other sources, and to prepare bibliographies and facilitate access to documents. Librarians at the library of the United Nations Office at Geneva believe that it would be useful to review the functions of the disarmament libraries, so that the Department librarians focus on functions not already fulfilled by the central libraries, avoiding duplicative services to users, or aspects of document processing, such as indexing, normally the responsibility of the central libraries. The collection of documents published by research institutes, specialized non-governmental organizations and governmental agencies — useful to Department staff, delegations and other users — is kept up to date under a limited acquisition plan and an exchange programme. For example, the Geneva disarmament library receives about 80 journals and publications addressed to it by other institutions and on circulation from the central library of the United Nations Office at Geneva. The trust fund established in 1978 to maintain the collection of the Geneva disarmament library is used sporadically. In contrast, UNIDIR receives journals and publications from over 300 sources. In accordance with its statute (see para. 32 above), UNIDIR is assisting delegations in their search for documentation. At Geneva, the Department and UNIDIR would benefit from setting up a jointly managed research and reference collection. This could be done under the supervision of the Department librarian, a half-time position.

C. Role of non-governmental organizations

71. Non-governmental organizations helped to revive the efforts for a comprehensive nuclear test ban, and played an active role in promoting the Chemical Weapons Convention. Two organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts to promote a nuclear-weapon-free world — International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War in 1985 and the Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs in 1995. In 1997, the Prize was awarded to the

International Campaign to Ban Landmines and Jody Williams, its founder.

72. The expert knowledge of a number of non-governmental organizations is useful to many delegations, particularly at Geneva, where the role of the Department for Disarmament Affairs is to provide substantive and administrative support to the Conference on Disarmament and the review conferences of existing multilateral disarmament treaties, as well as to implement the fellowship programme. At Geneva, almost all briefings and round tables are organized by non-governmental organizations and by UNIDIR, sometimes with the participation of Secretariat staff. For example, during the past two years, in collaboration with the Department of Peace Studies of the University of Bradford, United Kingdom, the Quaker United Nations Office, Geneva, assisted the work of the ad hoc group on the Biological Weapons Convention. This has consisted mainly of the preparation of a series of technical papers which are presented at a special briefing, set up with the collaboration of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, at some point during each of the sessions of the ad hoc group. The briefing sessions are always well attended by the representatives, and a number of them requested that the papers be distributed in advance of meetings so that they could discuss among themselves the substance presented.

73. The Department for Disarmament Affairs has also facilitated the participation of non-governmental organizations in the work of intergovernmental conferences to the fullest extent permitted by the rules of procedure governing those conferences (A/51/219, para. 15). However, the current limitations on such participation has prevented the contributions of non-governmental organizations from being as effective as they could have been. They cannot make oral or written presentations to the First Committee or the Disarmament Commission. They may send communications to the Conference on Disarmament. Communications are held in deposit by the Secretary-General of the Conference, and are made available to delegations upon request, which is a rare occurrence. In 1991 and 1996, the Special NGO Committee on Disarmament (Geneva) made suggestions for the development of closer relations between the Conference and non-governmental organizations active in the field, with the aim of helping such organizations to obtain a better appreciation of the work being done by the Conference and difficulties to be overcome. In 1996, the Economic and Social Council recommended to the General Assembly to examine the question of the participation of non-governmental organizations in all areas of the work of the United Nations, in the light of the experience gained through the *arrangements for consultation between non-governmental* organizations and the Council (decision 1996/297). The same year, the NGO Committee on Disarmament (New York) presented proposals for enlarging the contribution of non-governmental organizations to the work of the First Committee. At special conferences and meetings, such as the three special sessions devoted to disarmament and the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development in 1987, one to two days were set aside by the committee of the whole for selected non-governmental organizations to make oral presentations. In his concluding statement, the President of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons stated that arrangements for communication should be improved to encourage maximum exchange of ideas between non-governmental organizations and delegates during the Preparatory Committee meetings and at review conferences, and that the Centre for Disarmament Affairs could take on the organization of these improved contacts. The Preparatory Committee for the 2000 Review Conference decided that time would be made available at each session for representatives of non-governmental organizations to address delegations; this was implemented at the 1997 and 1998 sessions. Members of the Special NGO Committee on Disarmament (Geneva) stated to OIOS that a more structured interaction with the Department for Disarmament Affairs than currently exists is needed to bridge the gap between non-governmental organizations and the United Nations; regular consultations between the Department and those organizations would provide an opportunity to exchange views on the work of the Department and on what contributions the organizations could make.

74. Representatives who provided comments to the Central Evaluation Unit on the Department for Disarmament Affairs/NGO panels organized during disarmament week found that they were useful forums for delegations to exchange views with non-governmental organizations. In a written submission, one representative observed that unfortunately the series of seminars were held during a very intensive period of Committee work, which meant that many interested delegations were unable to attend the seminars; it would be advisable to hold these seminars, for instance, right after the general debate in the General Assembly. Seminars are organized on a more regular basis at Geneva than is the case in New York, owing to an active programme by UNIDIR and other institutions. The First Committee does not benefit from a programme of special events similar to those organized by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for delegations to the Second and Third Committees.

During the fifty-third session of the General Assembly, for example, 27 panels and briefings were organized by that Department for those two Committees. Delegations consider that panels and briefings provide them with useful background information on many of the specific issues being debated in the Committees. During disarmament week in 1998, the Department for Disarmament Affairs organized one symposium on the de-alerting of nuclear weapons, which was well attended. Such events cost little or nothing and demonstrate the usefulness of the Secretariat in a convener role. Other topics could have been equally useful, if they had not duplicated what non-governmental organizations were doing.

D. Awareness of United Nations disarmament activities

75. Indications of the interest in disarmament issues are somewhat contradictory. The interest of Governments is rather high; over 130 statements in the opening debate at the fifty-third session of the General Assembly addressed one or more of over 30 disarmament topics. On the other hand, publications on disarmament are not major sales items — United Nations publications, by the Department for Disarmament Affairs or UNIDIR, as well as publications of well-known research institutions, such as SIPRI. Besides the relative low visibility of the United Nations disarmament activities compared with other critical issues, during the last decade, several specialists explained that the diversification of disarmament issues and the increasingly technical nature of topics made it difficult to reach a wider audience.

76. Statistics on coverage of disarmament by news agencies show that, during the 1990s, the United Nations is increasingly mentioned in reference to disarmament.[9] In 1990, 10 per cent of stories on disarmament made at least one reference to the United Nations; in 1998, the proportion was over 50 per cent. Press correspondents explained to the Central Evaluation Unit that, in the 1990s, there was less focus on bilateral negotiations and that, by default, the number of references to the United Nations increased. Examination of a sample of full texts of stories on disarmament with reference to the United Nations filed in May and August 1998 shows that only 10 per cent of stories covered substantive aspects of the work of the United Nations. All other stories reported were country-specific situations, with little information on the overall disarmament challenge. Spokespersons in the Department of Public Information facilitate the work of correspondents by, for example, at Geneva, making copies of all statements available to correspondents at the same time they are distributed to delegations. However, the Department for Disarmament Affairs itself did not define a strategy to involve the specialized press, which consists mostly of foreign affairs correspondents. In 1991, the Evaluation Unit had suggested that the Department designate a focal point to deal with the press on substantive matters.

77. Many disarmament issues cannot be popularized, as nuclear testing or landmines were, and require the more painstaking approach of public education, as recommended in the Final Document of the first special session. Fewer institutions exist in disarmament than in such fields as environment or health to provide a stream of information and give weight to the issue. The United Nations — mandated to disseminate information which is factually correct, balanced and objective — cannot rely entirely on the advocacy organizations that exist. The United Nations needs to examine ways to disseminate materials that can be used with popular audiences, with particular attention to integrating disarmament to the wider perspective of peace and sustainable development, so that it is not perceived as a technical branch out of touch with important socio-political realities (report of the Advisory Board, in its capacity of Board of Trustees of UNIDIR (A/51/364, annex II, para. 17)). In 1998, the Advisory Board discussed the suggestion made to convene a special extended meeting or electronic conference of the Board with the aim of bringing into the discussion of this particular issue experts from fields such as education, the media, public relations, and non-governmental organizations. Representatives of non-governmental organizations considered it important to involve delegations — in particular from States which might be persuaded to invest in the revival of the information service — and interested parties from the private sector or foundations.

VII. Recommendations

78. The following recommendations are based on the findings presented in sections III, IV, V and VI of the present report.

Recommendation 1. Resources for disarmament activities

(a) *Regular budget resources.* Disarmament is one of the priority areas of work of the Organization. The priorities agreed upon at the first special session of the

[9] See Nexis-Wires, an electronic database containing the wires service stories of most news agencies worldwide.

General Assembly devoted to disarmament remain pressing and additional tasks have been mandated. The Secretariat should present, in the context of the review by the Committee for Programme and Coordination of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001, budget proposals to restore regular budget funding to a level comparable, in real terms, to that allocated in the 1990–1991 budget when the disarmament programme was last organized at the departmental level. This would permit the Department to provide the needed services in mandated priority areas, in particular in relation to the provision of technical information to Member States, support for, and promotion of, regional disarmament efforts and initiatives, and the promotion of a better understanding of the United Nations endeavours in the field of disarmament [see paras. 2, 11–12, 15, 19, 25, 31, 40, 44, 47, 60, 62, 65, 66, 74 and 77 above];

(b) *Supplementary resources*. Fund-raising for extrabudgetary resources should be pursued more actively by different branches of the Department for Disarmament Affairs; the primary strategy for such fund-raising should be to tie fund-raising to specific projects; the Department should seek the assistance of members of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters in fund-raising [see paras. 54, 64 and 77 above].

Recommendation 2. Reports for consideration of the First Committee

For the fifty-fourth and fifty-fifth sessions of the General Assembly, the Department for Disarmament Affairs should develop further the practice of providing factual summaries as an introduction or annex to a selection of the reports it prepares at the request of the Assembly. Such summaries should aim at facilitating the work of delegations and, at first, should cover topics which are largely of a technical nature. After this initial period of experience, the Department should assess to what extent this initiative has been useful to delegations and, as appropriate, expand it to cover a wider range of reports [see para. 19 above].

Recommendation 3. Multilateral agreements

(a) In keeping with existing legal provisions regarding the role of the Secretariat, and in collaboration with relevant treaty organizations and regional organizations, the Department for Disarmament Affairs should promote the ratification of disarmament treaties by facilitating the exchange of information between interested States and by undertaking, at the request of Governments, advisory services and technical assistance [see paras. 25 and 47];

(b) In accordance with the central role of the United Nations in the sphere of disarmament, which involves facilitating all disarmament measures and being kept informed of all disarmament efforts, as declared in paragraph 114 of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session, the Department should facilitate the exchange of experience between treaty-implementing organizations [see para. 27 above].

Recommendation 4. Increased collaboration in research

In the context of existing mandates, as adopted in the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session and subsequent General Assembly resolutions, the Department for Disarmament Affairs should explore modalities for increased collaboration with UNIDIR, organizations of the United Nations system, the research community and non-governmental organizations. This collaboration should be aimed at providing a greater volume of studies and technical information in response to existing and future requests of Member States [see paras. 29–31 and 72 above].

Recommendation 5. UNIDIR

The Department for Disarmament Affairs and UNIDIR should develop proposals for alleviating difficulties regarding the current financial and organizational arrangements adopted in implementation of the statute of UNIDIR, while maintaining its autonomous status. These proposals should be submitted to the General Assembly for consideration at its fifty-fifth session [see paras. 32–34 above].

Recommendation 6. Contingency access by the Department for Disarmament Affairs to external databases

Arrangements should be worked out between the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the relevant Secretariat departments and international organizations to facilitate access by the Department to disarmament-related information contained in their databases, so that the Department can access such databases when specific requests require it to compile information in them [see paras. 38–40 above].

Recommendation 7. Collaboration with regional organizations

(a) To establish effective liaison and cooperation with regional organizations, as recommended by the Disarmament Commission, the Department for

Disarmament Affairs should conclude agreements or memoranda of understanding with regional organizations, *inter alia*, to facilitate the exchange of experience between regions or to assist in the implementation of confidence-building measures adopted by Member States at the regional or subregional levels [see paras. 42–47 above];

(b) Department staff should maintain working-level contacts with staff of other organizations involved in disarmament-related programmes, to facilitate continued consultation or collaboration. In particular, working-level staff of other organizations should be kept informed regularly of the progress of a project or report to which they contributed. To avoid cumbersome procedures, the Department should explore the potential of targeted and secure electronic transmissions such as list-service e-mail arrangements [see paras. 46–47 above].

Recommendation 8. Dissemination of information to targeted audiences and the general public

To enhance the dissemination of information, the Department for Disarmament Affairs should:

(a) Request the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, with the participation of relevant substantive organizations, including the relevant treaty organizations, the Department of Public Information and communication professionals, to make proposals for a disarmament public information strategy. Proposals should include a set of measures to reach the specialized press and media, and channels of public education [see paras. 76–77 above];

(b) Sensitize potential donors to the importance of this information strategy to advance the cause of disarmament [see paras. 64 and 77 above];

(c) In addition to existing arrangements, conduct regular consultations, once a year or more frequently if needed, with non-governmental organization Committees and key non-governmental organizations and research institutions with the aim of permitting them to make a greater contribution to intergovernmental disarmament deliberations and negotiations under existing rules and procedures [see paras. 71–74 above].

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In-depth evaluation of the electoral assistance programme

Note by the Secretary-General

In conformity with paragraph 5 (e) (i) of General Assembly resolution 48/218 B of 29 July 1994, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the in-depth evaluation of the electoral assistance programme, dated 12 March 1999. The report has been reviewed by the relevant departments and offices. The Secretary-General takes note of the findings of the report and concurs with its recommendations.

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Annex

In-depth evaluation of the electoral assistance programme

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Summary

The present report reviews the achievements and shortcomings of the United Nations electoral assistance programme from 1992 to 1998 in (a) coordinating, considering and channelling requests for electoral assistance to the appropriate office or programme; (b) strengthening national capacity to organize and conduct democratic elections on a regular basis; (c) establishing and maintaining working relationships with relevant organizations and programmes of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental, regional and non-governmental organizations; and (d) developing an institutional memory of United Nations experience in the electoral field.

The report focuses on (a) the role of the Electoral Assistance Division in the context of the changing nature of the electoral assistance network and international norms and codes of practice; (b) overlapping roles and responsibilities in the area of electoral assistance among units and organizations of the United Nations system; (c) internal and external assessments of Electoral Assistance Division major activities; and (d) adequacy of existing standard operating procedures, institutional memory and lessons learned processes. Recommendations are made with respect to guidelines to Member States seeking electoral assistance: orientation and responsibilities of the Electoral Assistance Division/Department of Political Affairs for needs assessment, re-establishment and development of an electoral assistance network, contribution to intergovernmental political debate, coordination and facilitation of lessons learned, facilitation of the development of regional associations of electoral officials, mainstreaming of gender issues, active solicitation of extrabudgetary funds, and allocation of responsibilities for electoral assistance within the United Nations.

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Introduction

1. At its thirty-seventh session, the Committee for Programme and Coordination recommended to the General Assembly that an in-depth evaluation of the United Nations electoral assistance be prepared for consideration by the Committee in 1999 (see A/52/16,[1] para. 306).

2. The standard procedures for an in-depth evaluation were followed: initial consultations with the Department of Political Affairs, collection of available information, including existing assessments, requests for information addressed to entities dealing with electoral assistance, and structured interviews of staff members of the Department and these entities. Among the documents reviewed were internal assessment reports: a comprehensive review covering the period 1992–1994; a short report by a consultant; and discussions held at an Electoral Assistance Division staff retreat. These reports represent a significant self-evaluation effort on the part of the Division. The Central Evaluation Unit also took note of an independent study commissioned by the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade of electoral activities of five multilateral organizations to which Canada belongs: the Organization of American States (OAS), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the International Organization of the Francophonie, the Commonwealth and the United Nations. A systematic review of the professional literature was also conducted. The comments of management were sought on the draft report and were taken into account in the preparation of this final report. *None of the departments or offices consulted in the review process wished to record dissenting views on the findings in this report.*

3. Another methodological issue is the effort to mainstream gender issues. The General Assembly, in its resolution 52/100, called upon all States and the United Nations system to promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective at all levels, including in the design, monitoring and evaluation of all policies and programmes to ensure effective implementation of all critical areas of concern in the Platform for Action. In the area of electoral assistance, this issue is particularly relevant. An official document for the Fourth World Conference on Women[2] indicates that progress had been mixed in the post-cold-war period and problematic in many regions. Women's membership in parliaments declined between 1987 and 1994 in Eastern and Western Asia, and dropped sharply in Eastern Europe. There was a slight increase in Africa and Latin America and in developed regions outside Eastern Europe. Overall, in 1988 women representatives accounted for 14.8 per cent of all parliamentarians; by 1995 that level had dropped to 11.3 per cent. As was noted by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in a report issued in December 1997, the critical issue, emphasized in the Beijing Platform for Action, is the gap between *de jure*, and de facto, or the right as against the reality of women's participation in politics and public life generally. References to gender balance and participation are noted in the report whenever they appear relevant to the discussion.

4. A great deal of attention is devoted in the report to describing the role of intergovernmental, regional and non-governmental organizations which are active in the field of electoral assistance, some of which perform similar services to the Electoral Assistance Division of the United Nations, since this is pertinent to the future role and responsibilities of the Division.

I. Organizations providing international electoral assistance

A. United Nations

1. Focal point for electoral assistance activities and the Electoral Assistance Division

5. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/137, in 1992 the Secretary-General appointed the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs the focal point for all electoral assistance activities. The Electoral Assistance Division was established in the Department of Political Affairs in 1992 to support the focal point in carrying out his functions.

6. The medium-term plan for 1992–1997 (see A/47/6/Rev.1,[3] vol. I, paras. 4.37 to 4.40) states that the main objective of the subprogramme is to provide electoral assistance to Member States upon their request and that in implementing the subprogramme, the Secretariat will (a) coordinate and consider requests for electoral assistance; (b) channel requests for electoral assistance to the appropriate office or programme; (c) develop a system for an institutional memory of United Nations experience in the electoral field; (d) prepare a manual for use by United Nations election monitors; (e) develop a roster of international experts; (f) establish and maintain working relationships with relevant organizations and programmes of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental, regional and non-governmental organizations in order to ensure adequate coordination and consistency of responses; (g) organize and conduct workshops on electoral assistance; (h) establish and administer a trust fund for electoral verification. In the medium-term plan for 1998–2001(see A/51/6/Rev.1,[4] vol. I, paras. 1.13 to 1.15), the emphasis shifted to the development of national electoral capacity through assisting and strengthening domestic monitors and providing support to international observers through coordination of their activities and strengthening the national capacity to organize and conduct democratic elections on a regular basis. That medium-term plan also states that guidelines and operational manuals on electoral assistance will be further developed and a roster of international experts on electoral issues will be maintained and developed, and that institutional memory on electoral assistance activities will be enhanced.

7. The Division is relatively small; its 1998–1999 authorized staffing table was one D-2, one D-1, three P-5, three P-4/3 and four General Service staff members. The Division's expenditures of regular budgetary resources remained constant at $1.8 million for 1994–1995 and 1996–1997. The Division's appropriations for 1998–1999 were $2.6 million.

8. A trust fund for electoral observation was set up in 1992 to finance, in whole or in part, electoral verification missions, preliminary or fact-finding missions in relation to requests for electoral assistance, the cost of required support in cases where follow-up of electoral process is requested and to provide coordination and support to the activities of other international observers. The Division has decided to review the terms of reference of the trust fund to make it more project oriented, to centralize the accounting of the fund and to replenish the fund by submitting proposals to regular donors through annual fund-raising appeals.

9. The first Director of the Electoral Assistance Division retired in 1995, and a new Director was not appointed until July 1998. Under its first Director, the Division played an important role in the development of international electoral assistance. The long interregnum from his departure in 1995 until the appointment of his successor in 1998, coincided with a period of greater activity by other intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations involved in the field of electoral assistance.

2. United Nations Development Programme

10. At United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) headquarters in New York, the Management Development and Governance Division of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support is responsible for UNDP election-related assistance and liaises with the Electoral Assistance Division. UNDP electoral assistance projects use the array of modalities of execution currently available (Department of Economic and Social Affairs and Office for Project Services execution, national execution, execution by other agencies etc.). UNDP has issued joint guidelines with the United Nations on electoral assistance.[5]

11. Governance has become an increasingly large component of UNDP's worldwide portfolio of programmes, as demand from countries for such assistance has greatly expanded in recent years. An analysis of 115 country cooperation framework documents in 1997 showed that 63 per cent include support to governing institutions (parliaments, judiciaries and electoral bodies) as a component of their overall programmes for the period 1997–2000. A UNDP experience and lessons learned paper includes a section on election processes, where it is stated that elections are recognized by UNDP as prerequisites for the establishing of strong governing institutions. In most cases, when United Nations electoral assistance is provided to a country, UNDP's country office plays the role of a central support system for such an undertaking. Often, UNDP formulates and implements electoral assistance projects and it supports missions to conduct electoral needs assessments and meet specialized technical assistance requirements.

3. Other organizations

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

12. Since 1990, the Centre for Human Rights and subsequently the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has provided electoral assistance through its technical cooperation programme. In order to facilitate action in this area, the Office has also prepared guidelines for analysis of electoral laws and procedures, published a handbook on human rights and elections, developed draft guidelines for human rights assessments of requests for electoral assistance, and carried out a number of public information activities related to human rights and elections. The Office has participated in joint missions with the Electoral Assistance Division, most significantly in connection with Malawi. The focus of the Office's assistance in human rights-related electoral projects is on building or strengthening national capacities through advisory services, training and education activities. These activities are carried out at the request of Member States and funded through the voluntary funds for technical cooperation.

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

13. Since 1989, the former Division for Governance, Public Administration and Finance, now the Division for Public Economics and Public Administration, within its broad mandate of sharing and promoting good practices of public management and public administration in the delivery of public services, has provided support and technical assistance to electoral management bodies. This technical assistance has included missions initiated by the relevant predecessor department and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, by UNDP country offices and by the Electoral Assistance Division after its creation in 1992. Following the creation of the Division, the Department informed it of requests received from the UNDP offices for technical assistance to electoral management bodies. The Department, with its substantive capacity on electoral administration, managed the projects but kept the Division informed of these activities. The Department's missions initiated by UNDP or the Division covered the following range of activities: assessment of technical assistance needs;

formulation, implementation and management of UNDP electoral assistance projects; advisory services to the electoral authorities, and participation in conferences and regional colloquia. Recently, in partnership with the International Foundation of Electoral Systems (IFES) and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), the Department, with UNDP funding support, has participated in the development of a CD-ROM on the administration and cost of elections project, whose main purpose was to provide comprehensive and systematic information to those who design electoral procedures and provide advice to electoral management bodies. For the period 1992–1998, the Division participated in 60 electoral assistance-related projects.

Office for Project Services

14. Since 1994, the Office for Project Services has collaborated with the Electoral Assistance Division in executing — occasionally implementing — electoral projects. In most cases, UNDP is the requesting and funding agent, although the Division can also act as the funding agent. In providing such services, the Office relied on its internal support services for personnel, procurement of goods or services and for training, as well as on its roster of specialized personnel and suppliers for electoral projects. The Chief Technical Adviser reports to the Division for technical matters and to the Office for logistical and administrative matters. The Office obtains the Division's clearance in the recruitment of experts and in selecting suppliers or non-governmental organizations as subcontractors.

Department of Peacekeeping Operations

15. For mandated peacekeeping or special missions with an electoral component, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, as the executive arm of the Secretary-General for peacekeeping operations, develops plans and provides administrative, logistic and communications support to the electoral component of the mission. The staffing of the electoral unit of the mission is conducted in consultation with the Electoral Assistance Division. The Lessons Learned Unit of the Department also reviews lessons learnt from the electoral component of these missions. Division staff participated in the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium lessons learnt exercise.

4. Roles and responsibilities

16. As indicated by the above brief description, there are units and organizations within the United Nations system which have overlapping roles in the area of electoral assistance. Three recent assessment studies have concluded that there is a need to rationalize the division of responsibilities among these various organizations. An internal memorandum of the former Department for Development Support and Management Services dated May 1996 noted a declining trend in the number of requests by UNDP and the Electoral Assistance Division for execution by the Department of electoral assistance projects and recommended that a high-level meeting be organized between the Department, the Department of Political Affairs and UNDP to define a protocol of cooperation and resolve apparent conflict between these three groups. From the donors' perspective, there appears to be some confusion regarding the respective mechanisms established by the Division and UNDP to channel bilateral contributions for electoral assistance. Both the Division and UNDP have established electoral assistance trust funds. However, the UNDP trust fund, which has been relatively inactive, is being phased out. In addition, UNDP country offices may establish country-specific trust funds at the request of the donor community to collect and channel bilateral contributions to a specific election.

B. Regional and other intergovernmental organizations

17. With the end of the cold war in the late 1980s and early 1990s, many regional and intergovernmental organizations provided assistance to countries in organizing their first democratic elections. There has been a significant growth in the actors and participants active in this field. However, as there is no global survey of international electoral assistance, it is difficult to quantify this growth.

European Union

18. The European Union considers electoral assistance as one of the main activities within the general strategy aimed at promoting the rule of law and democratic freedoms. The European Union's commitment has been reaffirmed in European Union treaties and a wide range of European Union initiatives, including electoral assistance. During the 1990s, the European Union actively supported electoral processes, which are considered as a strategic phase in building democracy. In view of the political dimension of electoral assistance, several joint actions have been undertaken in the framework of the common foreign and security policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1996, 1997 and 1998), Palestine (1995) and former Zaire (1996). Besides their political impact, these actions can be economically measured and amount to more than 20 million ECUs. The latest example was the joint action to support the elections in Nigeria in February 1999. In addition, the European Union has largely funded electoral assistance missions and projects which have been developed in close cooperation with Member States, international organizations (in particular OSCE) and non-governmental organizations. In 1997, a specific European Union budget line targeted to electoral observation was created, complementing the funds allocated to electoral assistance within the European Union budget.

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

19. The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in Europe, created in 1991, has a professional staff of 26 and devotes a large proportion of its resources to election monitoring. To date the Office has assisted in the observation of approximately 40 elections in 16 countries. It includes an Election Section, which serves as the coordinating office of OSCE election observation missions, observes elections, assists in the review of electoral laws and administration and the implementation of recommendations that may result from the election observation missions, and organizes election-related seminars. The Parliamentary Assembly of OSCE, which was created in 1991 and which meets once a year, has traditionally provided separate electoral observation missions and reporting, although recently it has been operating under the umbrella of the Office.

Organization of American States

20. In 1990, the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy was established to respond promptly and effectively to member States that, in the full exercise of their sovereignty, request advice or assistance in preserving or strengthening their political institutions and democratic procedures. The Unit also promotes the exchange of information and expertise on democratic development among member States. OAS has been involved in approximately 40 electoral observations missions since 1990. The Unit's electoral technical assistance programme provides assistance to electoral institutions and fosters exchange of experience and knowledge among these and related institutions in order to facilitate the modernization and improvement of electoral systems.[6]

Organization of African Unity

21. At the twenty-sixth session of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) at Addis Ababa in July 1990, African heads of State and Government adopted a declaration on the political and socio-economic situation in Africa and the fundamental changes taking place in the world, which expressed a commitment to further democratization of African societies and the consolidation of democratic institutions. At the same session, African heads of State and Government also adopted the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation, which was the culmination of an international conference on popular participation in the recovery and development process in Africa, held earlier in 1990 at Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania. Since 1990, OAU has despatched observer missions to most member States which organized elections. It provided electoral assistance observations in 65 missions in 35 member States. It has also provided technical assistance and on occasion mediation to resolve electoral crises.

Commonwealth

22. The Commonwealth is committed to strengthening democracy and good governance. Its executive arm, the Commonwealth secretariat, organizes a range of activities to promote the 54-country association's Harare Principles as contained in the 1991 Harare Declaration adopted by the Commonwealth heads of Government. One aspect of these activities is to organize independent Commonwealth election observer groups. While the mandate of these missions has traditionally been limited to observing and proposing electoral recommendations, since 1997 the mandate has been extended to include proposing broader governmental recommendations on such issues as separation of powers, legislative reform, good governance and political party development. The secretariat also provides technical assistance to Commonwealth election management bodies, and runs workshops and training courses to promote good democratic practices. All such activities are undertaken in response to requests from member Governments. The focal point concerning Commonwealth activities to promote democracy is the Director of the Political Affairs Division.

International Organization of the Francophonie, (formerly Agence de cooperation culturelle et technique)

23. Since the Dakar summit in 1989, the agency has been mandated to develop programmes in favour of human rights and democracy. Since 1992, when it began its programme of electoral observation, the agency has conducted 37 electoral observation missions and 18 needs assessment missions. In addition, it has provided technical support to electoral bodies.

Inter-Parliamentary Union

24. Activities of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in the field of elections focus on standard setting, promoting the participation of women in political life and strengthening parliaments. Thus, IPU carries out studies and develops norms relating to electoral processes, such as the universal declaration on democracy, criteria for free and fair elections, and codes of conduct for elections. IPU also collects data on parliamentary elections and their results, and has created a database available to wider public; it maintains a worldwide collection of constitutions and electoral laws as well as specialized literature in the field. IPU activities in the area of research, world surveys and debates and publications have a clear gender dimension: the IPU publication *Men and Women in Politics, Democracy in the Making* (1997) is an example of that. Another major activity of IPU is its technical assistance

programme, which aims to strengthen the parliamentary institution resulting from the electoral process and promote respect for the outcome of the electoral process.

International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance

25. Located at Stockholm, International IDEA was established by an international treaty in 1995. Its members include 17 Governments and four international non-governmental organizations. A gender working group was established at International IDEA in September 1996. Recently, the Institute completed a handbook entitled *Women in Parliament*. Examples of other publications by the Institute include *Proceedings of the Democracy Forum* (1996 and 1997), *Democracy in Romania I* (June 1997), *Consolidating Democracy in Nepal II* (June 1997) and *Evaluating Election Observation Missions: Lessons Learned from the Russian Elections of 1996* (various codes of conduct also published by the Institute are discussed in para. 47 below). International IDEA has a staff of 40 and annual budget of $8.5 million.

C. Other assistance and related activities

26. Many national Governments have provided technical and financial electoral assistance on both a bilateral and multilateral basis.

27. Other non-governmental organizations, such as the International Republican Institute, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs and the Carter Centre have been very active in electoral assistance. IFES, established in 1987, has conducted projects in 85 countries. As indicated in paragraph 13 above, IFES is a partner with the United Nations and International IDEA in the administration and cost of elections project.

28. The following are activities of regional associations of electoral officials:

(a) A colloquium on African election administration was convened at Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, in November 1994. The Electoral Assistance Division was a co-sponsor of the colloquium together with the former Department for Development Support and Management Services, IFES, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs and the African American Institute. The Association of African Election Authorities was established and held its founding meeting at Kampala in January 1997. The meeting was supported by IFES and the Electoral Assistance Division. The inaugural general assembly meeting of the Association of African Election Authorities at Accra in August 1998 was coordinated by IFES and hosted by the electoral commission of Ghana. Participants discussed campaign finance, demarcation of constituency boundaries, voting abroad, and the administration of local elections in both plenary and working group sessions;

(b) The founding general assembly meeting of the Association of Caribbean Electoral Organizations took place at San Juan, Puerto Rico in March 1998;

(c) A regional conference for Central Asian election administrators, held at Almaty, Kazakhstan in November 1998, was attended by approximately 60 election administrators from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, and discussed such issues as the increasing professionalism of elections administration, informing the electorate and resolving electoral disputes. The conference was co-sponsored by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the Electoral Assistance Division, UNDP and IFES.

D. United Nations electoral assistance network

29. A conference on the coordination of international assistance in the electoral field was convened by the United Nations at Ottawa in October 1992. The primary purpose of the conference was to examine ways of strengthening cooperation among Governments, international, regional, multilateral parliamentary and non-governmental organizations. Conference participants identified the following areas in which mutual support and cooperation could be strengthened: (a) information-sharing, (b) financial, material and technical assistance, and (c) electoral observation. In recognition of its comprehensive and versatile role, the United Nations — specifically the Electoral Assistance Unit — was designated the focal point for voluntary information-sharing and networking. The Conference approved the establishment under the auspices of the Electoral Assistance Unit of an electoral assistance information network.

30. The most recent report of the electoral assistance information network issued by the Electoral Assistance Division covers the period 1 January 1992–31 December 1993, and is dated July 1994. During this period, the membership of the network consisted of 18 States and 16 intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations providing electoral assistance, as well as the United Nations itself. The report consisted of brief descriptions of the electoral assistance activities of the network's members for each of the 92 countries receiving assistance during the period covered. It also listed seminars, conferences and workshops held, and publications issued, on electoral assistance, as well as the names, addresses, telephone and fax numbers of electoral assistance focal points. No equivalent record of worldwide electoral assistance exists for the period since it was discontinued. With the development of the Internet, it is now possible to have a record of prospective activities updated regularly and distributed, with no delay to all members of the network.

31. In 1998, the Central Evaluation Unit conducted an opinion survey of intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations on the mailing list of the Division. There was virtual unanimity on two points:

(a) It would be useful for the United Nations to re-establish an electoral assistance network;

(b) The network should sponsor exchanges of information on the electoral assistance activities in general and produce reports on activities of its members.

32. Respondents who had attended the 1992 Ottawa conference considered that the United Nations should again play the role of convener of periodic meetings along the same lines; these meetings would be most useful if they were relatively informal and designed to permit participants to understand each others' projects, and to formulate recommendations and develop commitments. Other proposals of respondents included:

(a) *Regional associations of electoral officials*: the United Nations should act as a coordinator and convene periodic meetings of the leadership of these associations;

(b) Training: the United Nations should play a leadership role in the development of curricula for short courses on all aspects of elections, using the material developed in the administration and cost of elections project.

II. International norms, mandates and codes of practice

A. Norms in international instruments and agreements

33. At the level of broad principles, the General Assembly has underscored the significance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which establish that the authority to govern shall be based on the will of the people as expressed in periodic and genuine elections. An elaborate analysis of the pertinent clauses included in the full range of international instruments is included in a handbook published in 1994 by the Centre for Human Rights. Apart from the Declaration and the Covenant, the handbook also took into account universal instruments, such as the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights. The handbook's analysis also includes regional instruments.

34. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women places special importance on the participation of women in the public life of their countries. Article 7 of the Convention calls on States Parties to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country, and in particular shall insure to women, on equal terms with men, the right to vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for elections to all publicly elected bodies. Article 8 calls on States Parties to ensure that women have equal opportunity to represent their Governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations. Other international instruments, conventions and declarations also place great importance on the participation of women in public life, and have set a framework of international standards of equality, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Political Rights of Women, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and paragraph 13 of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

35. IPU has focused on all aspects of women's participation in the electoral process both as voters and candidates, including legislation, electoral practices, institutional and cultural inhibition and barriers, action at the level of political parties, quotas and positive discrimination measures. In 1994, it developed a plan of action to correct present imbalances in the participation of men and women in political life, and has collected statistical data on the outcome of legislative elections with respect to gender, maintained a Web site and issued statistical surveys on this subject.

B. Actions by the General Assembly

1. Mandates for electoral assistance

36. Since 1991, the General Assembly has adopted a series of resolutions pertaining to enhancing the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections.[7] At the same time, the General Assembly has reaffirmed respect for the principles of national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States in their electoral processes in another series of resolutions.[8] These mandates have broadened over the last few years. As requested in these resolutions, the Secretary-General has submitted reports on electoral issues to the General Assembly.[9] It should be noted that none of the General Assembly resolutions

discussed in this section make reference to gender or gender balance. The recent evolution of electoral assistance mandates in General Assembly resolutions is outlined in table 1.

Table 1
Evolution of electoral assistance mandates provided by the General Assembly under the item "Enhancing the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections", 1990–1998

	Session of the General Assembly when the mandated activity was first mentioned in a resolution								
Mandated activity	*45*	*46*	*47*	*48*	*49*	*50*	*51*	*52*	*53*
Electoral assistance at request of Member States			X						
Develop institutional memory						X			
Maintain roster of experts			X						
Collaboration with other United Nations departments and UNDP			X						
Coordination with intergovernmental organizations			X						
Human rights advisory services				X					
Prerequisites for United Nations assistance: adequate time, conditions for free and fair elections, and adequate and comprehensive reporting of results			X						
Assistance before and after elections, including needs assessment missions					X				
Programmes for consolidation of democratic process					X				
Coordination of election preparation/observation with NGOs					X				
Post-election assistance to contribute to stability and continuity of electoral processes						X			
Support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to democratization activities						X			
UNDP civil service reform and governance						X			
Enhancing capacity of electoral institutions						X			
Post-election assistance to contribute to sustainability of electoral processes						X			
Respond to evolving nature of requests and growing need for medium-term assistance								X	

37. The General Assembly, in its resolution 50/185, took note of the evolution in the nature of requests for assistance, and recommended that the Electoral Assistance Division consider ways to respond to its increased and evolving responsibilities and enlarged mandate, and report thereon to the Assembly at its fifty-second session. The Secretary-General's report to the Assembly at its fifty-second session concluded with some reflections for future activity, noting that emphasis must now be placed on the sustainability of the electoral process and on assisting electoral administrators; that needs assessment missions must engage representatives of requesting Governments in an active dialogue; that the Division needs to be prepared to backstop field projects over longer periods of time; and that compilation and sharing of information and data on elections and their administration is an important new service which the United Nations is working to provide (see A/52/474, paras. 32–35).

38. Electoral assistance activities have also been considered in the Assembly since the forty-ninth session, in 1994, in a third series of resolutions and reports of the Secretary-General under the item "Support by the United Nations system for the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies."[10] This item was initiated after the Second International Conference on New and Restored Democracies, held at Managua in July 1994. The Secretary-General, in reports to the General Assembly under this item,[11] has discussed electoral activities in this broader context. In fact, the most elaborate presentation of systematic information and statistics on United Nations electoral assistance is to be found in the annexes to one such report, document A/51/512. The General Assembly, in paragraph 9 of its resolution 53/31, encouraged the Secretary-General to continue to improve the capacity of the Organization in these areas. The reports of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly under this item are not drafted by staff of the Division but originate in a different section of the Department of Political Affairs.

2. Guidelines for Member States

39. Guidelines on electoral assistance for Member States have developed through review by the General Assembly of proposals by the Secretary-General. Initially, the Secretary-General, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 45/150, invited Member States to submit their views concerning suitable approaches that would permit the Organization to respond to requests from Member States for electoral assistance. A report submitted to the Assembly at its forty-sixth session proposed four criteria which should be satisfied if an eventual mission were to be considered. The General Assembly, in its resolution 46/137, took note of those criteria, which it decided should be met before the Organization agreed to requests for electoral verification. At the forty-seventh session, the Secretary-General proposed revised criteria and also proposed guidelines on the organization and conduct of an electoral process, supervision of an electoral process, verification of an electoral process, following an electoral process, and provision of support to other international observers. The General Assembly, in paragraph 9 of its resolution 47/138, recommended that the proposed guidelines on electoral assistance be considered as provisional and requested the Secretary-General to evaluate them in the light of experience. It should be noted that the above-mentioned guidelines to Member States do not mention gender issues.

40. An evaluation of the guidelines was submitted to the Assembly at its forty-eighth session (A/48/590, paras. 56–74). In its resolution 48/131, the Assembly requested that United Nations electoral assistance continue on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the proposed guidelines (para. 2) and asked for a revised set of guidelines for consideration at its forty-ninth session (para. 10). The revised guidelines for Member States considering the formulation of requests for electoral assistance (A/49/675, annex III) set out preconditions for and types of electoral assistance. The preconditions were first, a formal written request from the Government, and second, a determination by a United Nations electoral assistance mission of whether the United Nations should provide assistance, which involved a determination by the mission that the basic conditions for a legitimate and truly democratic process are present (paras. 2 and 3). In paragraph 3 of its resolution 49/190, the Assembly requested that the United Nations continue its efforts to ensure, before undertaking to provide electoral assistance to a requesting State, that there is adequate time to organize and carry out an effective mission for providing such assistance, that conditions exist to allow a free and fair election and that provisions can be made for adequate and comprehensive reporting on the results of the mission. In paragraph 13 of the same resolution, the Assembly took note of the guidelines.

C. Standard-setting by other intergovernmental organizations

European Union

41. In June 1998, the Council of Ministers of the European Union (EU) adopted a document setting minimum conditions for EU involvement in electoral assistance. These include universal franchise, the rights for political parties and individual candidates to take part in the elections, freedom of expression, and reasonable access to the media by all parties and candidates. The document contained a code of conduct for electoral observers, and the European Commission is currently preparing a first communication on electoral assistance which will outline a common approach in terms of guidelines and criteria regarding electoral assistance missions.

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

42. The OSCE commitments, agreed upon at Copenhagen at the second meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension in 1990, emphasize the central role of elections in securing the citizen's right to participate in the Government of his or her country. The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights election observation handbook for 1997 states that the OSCE commitments should be clearly reflected in the legal framework for the election, including the constitution and the statutory provisions (election law, political party law, media law, criminal code, rules of procedure), and that the Office would not be inclined to observe an election in which the OSCE commitments were not clearly reflected in the governing legislation and regulations. The handbook provides detailed guidelines for election observers.

Organization of American States

43. The 1985 amendments to the OAS charter of 1948, referring to the role of representative democracy, provide the general principles underlying electoral observation procedures in OAS. By a resolution adopted in November 1989, the OAS General Assembly recommended that observation missions be sent to States at their request for the purpose of observing the development, if possible, of all the stages of the electoral process. In 1998, OAS published a manual for the organization of election observation missions.

Organization of African Unity

44. Article 13 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights,[12] which was adopted at Nairobi in 1981 and was ratified in 1986, stipulates the rights of citizens to take part in the Government of their country. The Charter is binding upon its signatories. OAU has also issued guidelines for electoral observation.

Commonwealth secretariat

45. In 1991, the Commonwealth adopted the Harare Declaration, which gave high priority to the organization's promotion of its fundamental political values, defined as democracy, democratic processes and institutions which reflect national circumstances, human rights, the rule of law and just and honest government. In 1991, the Commonwealth secretariat prepared guidelines for Commonwealth groups which observe elections in member countries. The Commonwealth has also published a manual entitled "Organization of free and fair elections at cost-effective levels", aimed at assisting Commonwealth Governments, electoral authorities and opposition parties to contribute to the organization and conduct of presidential and general elections.

Inter-Parliamentary Union

46. In 1994, the IPU adopted a document entitled "Declaration on criteria for free and fair elections", which established norms regarding the rights of citizens, parties and States with respect to the electoral process. Also in 1994, in connection with standard-setting in the area of gender, IPU adopted a plan of action to correct present imbalances in the participation of men and women in political life. In 1997, the IPU Council adopted at Cairo a universal declaration on democracy; representatives of the parliaments of 128 countries participated in the work of the Cairo conference. In 1998, IPU published a model code of conduct for elections[13] which acknowledges that a successful and informed electoral process is the joint responsibility of all involved: political parties and candidates; supporters and voters; police and security forces; Governments and public officials; media and observers. An annex to the model code of conduct contains a compendium of 16 codes adopted in internationally assisted elections.

International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance

47. In response to a series of commitments which were adopted at a round table jointly organized in 1995 by the United Nations and International IDEA on the topic of international electoral observation, International IDEA has published a code of conduct for the ethical and professional observation of elections, which emphasized the standards of comprehensiveness, transparency and accuracy in observation. It has also published a code of conduct for the ethical and professional administration of elections, which emphasized the norms of demonstrating respect for the law, non-partisanship, transparency, accuracy and service to the voters. In 1998, it published guidelines for determining involvement in international election observation.

48. As part of the Central Evaluation Unit survey referred to above, some intergovernmental organizations and NGOs active in electoral assistance provided comments pertinent to the issue of a United Nations declaration on standards and norms. Those who considered that a declaration by the General Assembly on the process of observation would be useful referred to some or all of the following elements:

(a) The importance of a long-term perspective for the observation of democratic processes;

(b) The involvement of national observers;

(c) Electoral assistance to be provided with a developmental viewpoint in mind;

(d) A mechanism for learning from experience in democratic development;

(e) Minimal training for observers.

One respondent thought that proposals along these lines should emerge from a meeting of international groups involved in electoral observation and assistance.

III. United Nations electoral activities

A. Electoral Activities of the Electoral Assistance Division

1. Preliminary processes

49. All United Nations electoral assistance is based on a formal written request from the Government, which should be transmitted at least 12 weeks before the election to the focal

point for electoral assistance. The request is usually conveyed through the local UNDP representative or through the permanent mission to the United Nations.

50. When a request for electoral assistance is submitted to the focal point for electoral assistance, an initial screening takes place through consultation between the Electoral Assistance Division and the regional desk to which the request was forwarded for analysis within the Department of Political Affairs. The report of the Glen Cove retreat stated that while the Division continues to consult with regional divisions on substantive issues in order to make its recommendations to the focal point, it has experienced difficulty in receiving timely regional division inputs. In most cases, the Division is requested to take immediate action since most requests need to be dealt with on an urgent basis.

51. In the cases of first-time elections, complex political situations or unclear requests, a United Nations needs assessment mission is often sent to the requesting country. Its report is the basis for discussions to determine whether the United Nations should provide assistance, and if so the most appropriate type of assistance. An analysis of the statistics provided to CEU by the Division indicates that since 1992, there has been some increase in the proportion of requests which result in needs assessment missions.

Malawi: a case study of the needs assessment phase

52. On 22 October 1992, the United Nations received a request from the Government of Malawi for assistance in the organization and funding of a referendum on the issue of one-party/multi-party systems of government. The preparatory mission, which included a human rights officer from the former Centre for Human Rights, spent a week in Malawi in November 1992 and had consultations with the following groups: government officials and representatives, including members of the cabinet; members of the task force on the holding of a referendum in Malawi; members of the electoral commission; local officials and traditional chiefs; representatives of local NGOs; the media; religious communities; and representatives of the donor community. Towards the end of their visit, the members of the team met with the President of Malawi. The needs assessment report focused on preconditions related to the freedom and fairness of the referendum process. The draft report was provided to the Government for comments before it was finalized; most of its comments were incorporated in the final report, which was circulated among individuals who had participated in the consultations. In December 1992, a follow-up mission was requested by the President of Malawi and his Cabinet. The Government also requested the participation of a consultant to assist it in drafting referendum regulations and other legal texts. In response, the Director of the Electoral Assistance Division and a legal adviser from the former Centre for Human Rights, went to Malawi in January 1993. As previously, the members of mission held meetings with many parties. The report of the second mission identified major sources of disagreement among the parties which would seriously affect the organization of a free and fair referendum, and made recommendations to promote consensus on these issues. In March 1993, a third United Nations mission was sent to Malawi to report on the organization of the referendum a few months before it was scheduled. Despite the short time available, electoral assistance was provided and the referendum took place in June 1993. The UNDP resident coordinator provided critical support at all stages of the operation, particularly in facilitating discussion between the Government and opposition at crucial junctures, and in coordinating donor assistance (see A/48/590, para. 43). A United Nations electoral assistance secretariat was established almost three months before the referendum. Its basic tasks were the coordination of international observers, technical advice and assistance to the National Referendum Commission, poll worker training and civic education (see A/48/590, para. 42). Observer coverage began with

registration, continued through the campaign and concluded with the conduct of the referendum. A majority of the voters supported multiparty democracy.

2. Nature and extent of assistance, 1992–1998

53. A review of statistics included in the annual reports of the Electoral Assistance Division (see table 2) indicates that the number of requests was highest in 1992 due to the number of countries, particularly in Africa, which were holding their first democratic elections; the ratio of requests to missions sent was also highest that year. There has been a gradual decline in that ratio from 1993 to the present.

Table 2
Electoral assistance provided by the Electoral Assistance Division, 1992–1998[a]

	Requests		*Assistance*		
Year	*Number of Member States requesting assistance*	*Number of requests*	*Number of Member States receiving assistance*	*Number of assistance missions*	*Ratio of requests missions sent (percentage)*
1992	29	31	27	28	90
1993	19	20	16	16	80
1994	17	18	13	14	78
1995	22	22	16	16	73
1996	24	26	13	13	50
1997	12	15	8	8	53
1998	19	21	10	10	47
Total	**78[b]**	**153**	**68[b]**	**105**	**68**

Sources: Electoral Assistance Division, annual reports, and A/51/512.

[a] Excluding the major missions discussed in sect. III B below, and excluding needs assessment missions unless they were the only form of assistance.

[b] Overall, 1992–1998 (many States requested/received assistance in more than one year).

54. The four major types of electoral assistance provided by the Division, excluding the major missions, are:

(a) *Coordination and support.* The primary purpose of coordination and support is to create an effective and integrated observer network out of a number of small international delegations which is relatively economical, requires less lead time than other forms of international observation, and shares financial and personnel costs among all participating sponsors (see A/48/590, para. 38). Once the focal point for electoral assistance has determined that a coordination and support mission is both desirable and feasible, an electoral assistance secretariat is established in the country to plan and manage all aspects of the international observation operation, including the provision of logistical and technical support to the Joint International Observer Group (JIOG). The JIOG includes a core group of long-term observers, sponsored and seconded by the international community, whose purpose is to establish a presence in each major region of a country and to observe the electoral campaign. During the pre-election phases, the observers report to the secretariat coordinator on a regular basis, taking note of major election-related events, monitoring media coverage of the campaign and indicating any problems which may impact the viability

of the elections. The observers also receive complaints from individuals and transmit these to the secretariat coordinator. Several days prior to election day, a large group of short-term international observers arrive in the country to augment the core observer group. The short-term observers may be sponsored by donor Governments, international intergovernmental institutions and NGOs, or recruited locally through the resident international community. Prior to their deployment throughout the country, the observers are officially accredited and participate in pre-election debriefing sessions. They observe election day polling, the vote count and the central tabulation of results in their respective districts and return to the capital to participate in post-elections debriefing sessions. Upon completion of the observation process, the JIOG typically releases a press statement describing the observation findings;

(b) *Technical assistance.* Such assistance can be classified in three general categories: (i) those contributing to national capacity-building through the establishment of new electoral institutions or the strengthening of existing capabilities; (ii) those which relate to the human rights aspects of the electoral process; and (iii) those which provide specific, legal, constitutional, logistic or technical advice or various types of electoral equipment and supplies. Technical assistance is provided through the Electoral Assistance Division, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNDP and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, depending on the type of assistance required (see A/52/474, para. 29);

(c) *Support for national observers.* In 1994, for Mexico's national elections, the Division adopted a new approach to electoral assistance. The emphasis was on providing training for potential domestic observers that would contribute to the creation of a national network of election observers. The primary emphasis was on long-term capacity-building within the country and its contribution to the creation of confidence among citizens in their own electoral process (see A/49/675, para. 28). Despite the emphasis placed in the 1998-2001 medium-term plan on assisting and strengthening domestic monitors and the success of the Mexico experience, this approach was not applied by the Division to other countries;

(d) *Follow and report.* This type of assistance occurs in special cases, when a United Nations observer or small team may be sent to follow an electoral process and provide an internal report to the Secretary-General on the conduct of the election(see A/ 49/675, annex III, para. 16). It is generally agreed that this form of assistance has a negligible effect and is therefore not warranted unless special circumstances prevail.

55. It was not always clear to the Central Evaluation Unit which organization was assigned the leadership role in executing a specific project. Aside from UNDP funding of many technical assistance projects, UNDP resident representatives have been requested to follow and report on elections and in coordinating donors' conferences. In many cases, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs served as the implementing agency and was involved in various components of projects requiring technical and backstopping expertise. In a smaller number of cases, the Office for Project Services acted in that capacity.

3. Assessments

56. Some of the assessments available to the Central Evaluation Unit with respect to standard electoral activities are summarized in table 3. These assessments were shown to representatives of the Member States concerned and were considered acceptable.

Table 3
Some assessments of the electoral activities of the Electoral Assistance Division

Electoral mission	*Overall assessment*
1. Lesotho, 1993	The United Nations role was significant and positive. United Nations assistance built local capacity in a minor way.
2. Burundi, 1993	The United Nations role was significant and positive. United Nations assistance built local capacity indirectly: local staff were hired for certain programmes but not trained to sustain them.
3. Malawi, 1993/1994	The United Nations role was significant and positive. United Nations assistance built local capacity in a significant manner. The United Nations developed new institutional approaches in this case, which will be useful in the future. The United Nations was very influential in improving the 1993–1994 Malawi electoral process, and provided sound logistics and observer coordination. Most commentators see this as a good example of how the United Nations can provide long-term, coordinated international assistance where there is consistency of advice, minimal duplication of effort and cost-effective use of donors.
4. Mexico, 1994	The United Nations mission contributed to the preparation of an electoral observation methodology and observer manuals, in addition to technical support for strategic planning, organization of quick counts and development of logistics manuals. This novel use of assistance to aid domestic groups proved to be a means to promote national capacity-building while at the same time respecting national sovereignty.
5. United Republic of Tanzania, 1995	From the outset there were logistics, communications and briefing problems, with many of the sub-observer missions complaining that they were not consulted enough.
6. Cambodia, 1998	The ambiguity and lack of consensus on the mandate, combined with the confusion on the ground as to the exact nature of United Nations involvement, negatively affected the credibility and effectiveness of the United Nations at the earliest stage of the operation. The lateness of formal United Nations involvement in the electoral process had a negative impact on the effectiveness of the electoral assistance secretariat's efforts on the ground.

Sources: 1, 2 and 3: Larry Garber and Clark Gibson, review of United Nations electoral assistance, 1992–1993, UNDP project INT/91/033, 18 August 1993; 3, 4 and 5: Taylor Wentges, *Multilateral Electoral Development: A Comparative Review of the Electoral Development Activities of the Organization of American States, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Francophonie, the Commonwealth and the United Nations* (Government of Canada, Department of Foreign Trade and International Affairs, March 1998); 6: Department of Political Affairs, "United Nations electoral assistance to Cambodia: lessons learned and reflections for the future", 29 September 1998.

B. Major electoral missions

1. Nature of assistance

57. In contrast to the standard electoral activities of Electoral Assistance Division, each major electoral mission requires a separate mandate. There are three categories: (a) organization and conduct of elections, (b) supervision, and (c) verification. Thirteen major electoral operations have been undertaken so far. Of these, nine have included military and/or police components (Angola, Cambodia, Central African Republic, El Salvador, Eastern Slavonia, Haiti, Liberia, Mozambique and Western Sahara); the remaining four were essentially civilian operations (Eritrea, Namibia, Nicaragua and South Africa). The mandating organ (the General Assembly and/or the Security Council) endorses the final statement issued by electoral missions concerning the elections. It is worth noting that the United Nations International Police Task Force (UNIPTF), a component of the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH), was involved in monitoring security arrangements for three national elections in Bosnia held between 1996 and 1998. In addition, the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) is mandated to play a major role in preparation for the upcoming elections in Tajikistan, in collaboration with OSCE.

Organization and conduct of elections

58. This type of assistance is the most complex, and has been provided only in Cambodia (UNTAC) and Eastern Slavonia (UNTAES) to date. The mission in the Western Sahara is currently ongoing. Owing to the significant lead time required (a minimum of 18 months) as well as the substantial financial, personnel and material resources needed for such an operation, this type of assistance is rarely mandated (see A/49/675, annex III).

Supervision of elections

59. There have been no United Nations missions for the supervision of elections since the mission to Namibia in 1989.

Verification of elections

60. Since 1992, the United Nations has conducted verification missions in Angola, El Salvador, Eritrea, Haiti, Liberia, Nicaragua, Mozambique and South Africa. In such cases, the United Nations is requested to verify the freedom and fairness of specific aspects of the electoral process conducted by the national election authority. Because the United Nations is expected to make a final statement on the conduct of the elections, verification must cover all relevant aspects of the electoral process, thus requiring extensive chronological and geographical coverage.

2. Assessments

61. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations has a lessons learned procedure that covers all components of a mission, including the electoral assistance component. In addition, there are end-of-mission reports drafted by the electoral component of peacekeeping missions, and external assessments of some missions. Common issues mentioned in these assessments that proved problematic included electoral planning, such as unrealistic timetables, late delivery of polling materials and observers pulled out before vote counting; insufficient concern about capacity-building, such as insufficient voter education; and personnel and staffing issues, such as untrained or inexperienced observers.

62. With respect to the Department's lessons learned procedures, its first attempt to draw general lessons from several missions is set out in the study "Multidisciplinary peacekeeping: lessons from recent experience", issued in December 1996. However, this study did not include a section on the electoral component of peacekeeping missions. One of the consequences of that omission was that the electoral component of subsequent missions with an electoral mandate, such as UNTAES, could not be designed to take into account agreed on lessons of experience. The *ex post facto* UNTAES lessons learned report, however, did include a section on elections.

3. Role of the Electoral Assistance Division in major electoral missions

63. The Division has been designated the responsibility centre for the electoral component of peacekeeping missions in accordance with a recommendation of the Central Evaluation Unit in 1994.[14] This responsibility incudes the following functions: (a) advises and assists the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping in the development of the electoral component of peacekeeping missions; (b) establishes, develops and maintains institutional memory, and to that end (i) develops and maintains information on previous and current peacekeeping missions, including training materials, manuals, handbooks and other instructions; and (ii) gathers information on related activities undertaken by intergovernmental, regional or non-governmental organizations as well as other entities of the United Nations system. The internal report of the Glen Cove retreat stated that the Division concluded that there was a need to review its cooperation with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations with a view to strengthening the Division's activities in this context. More discussions with the Department and its Field Administration and Logistics Division are necessary as well as the need to have more regular backstopping from headquarters. The Electoral Assistance Division should get involved in the preparatory phase of the operation, and the selection of members of the electoral component should be made jointly with the Field Administration and Logistics Division.

C. Managerial issues

1. Standard operating procedures

64. The Electoral Assistance Division has handbooks and manuals with standard operating procedures in draft for most activities but it lacks a lessons learned process to revise such procedures. However, there are no standard operating procedures for support to national observers, and existing procedures do not adequately cover gender issues. The following table summarizes the findings of the Central Evaluation Unit with respect to the existence and adequacy of standard operating procedures on electoral assistance.

Table 4
United Nations standard operating procedures for electoral assistance

Type of electoral assistance	*Does an official handbook, manual or checklist exist?*	*Gender issues?*
1 General framework	Joint United Nations/UNDP guidelines of 1996 and supplement (undated) include preconditions, respective roles within the United Nations system and formal procedures for processing requests	Does not cover gender issues
2 Needs assessment missions and technical assistance	Draft guidelines, March 1997	Does not cover gender issues
3 Coordination and support of and international observers handbooks	Draft operational guidelines, March 1997, include checklists and criteria, a section on JIOG, and 11 annexes	Some checklists annexed by IGO/NGO refer to gender issues
4 Follow and report	None	
5 Support for national monitors	None	
6 Electoral component of peacekeeping missions with verification mandates	No official handbook exists Standard mandate, terms of reference, organization chart and job description of senior officials exists (March 1995)	Does not cover gender issues

65. The Electoral Assistance Division has developed and maintains a roster of international electoral experts for both the staffing of the electoral components of peacekeeping operations and the provision of United Nations electoral assistance generally. It has also invited Member States to identify candidates who might be seconded as members of United Nations electoral verification missions. The Division is currently reviewing its list of electoral experts and intends to convert it to electronic format. In addition, it has standing arrangements with the United Nations volunteer programme. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations has a roster for personnel called upon to perform generalist electoral functions. The Office for Project Services also has a roster.

2. Institutional memory and lessons learned processes

66. The joint United Nations/UNDP guidelines on providing electoral assistance state that at the conclusion of each project, the Division should receive a final project report from the experts involved. The resident coordinator may also be requested to assess the performance of the consultant and the effectiveness of the assistance provided. Based on such evaluation, the Electoral Assistance Division can improve future performance and better anticipate future country needs. At the current time, neither the Electoral Assistance Division nor the UNDP Management Development and Governance Division maintain a documentation centre which includes end-of-mission reports and evaluations of electoral assistance projects; the resident representative does not always provide end-of-mission reports to the Electoral Assistance Division. There is no systematic and comprehensive institutional memory of assistance projects and no inventory of lessons learned from electoral assistance.

67. As the report to the General Assembly on the follow-up process to the Third Conference on New or Restored Democracies indicates, UNDP, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Department of Political Affairs will be creating Web sites on democratization and good governance; the Department of Economic and Social Affairs will compile extensive information on inventories, databases and directories pertaining to democratization and governance, and has prepared a proposal on in-depth assessments by Governments on the assistance provided to them in these areas.[15]

68. There have been several external assessment studies of United Nations electoral assistance which follow well-conceived methodologies. The 1993 Garber and Gibson study, for example, organized its findings in terms of the following issues:

(a) Whether or not the United Nations mission played a significant role in the election;

(b) Whether or not local capacity was built up by the mission;

(c) Whether or not the United Nations should have participated in this election in the manner it did;

(d) Suggested modification to standard operating procedures.

The Electoral Assistance Division has conducted one lessons learned study, on the coordination and support of the elections in Cambodia in July 1998. It consisted of a one-day meeting with discussions following a pre-established agenda, which included such issues as the formulation of the mandate and conditions of United Nations involvement, the operation of the electoral assistance secretariat and the Joint International Observer Group, funding and management and coordination. A member of the Central Evaluation Unit attended the meeting, which included interesting and highly informed discussions. However, the Department of Political Affairs had not established an assessment methodology as a basis for conducting this process, and did not follow the methodology developed by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations lessons learned unit (see E/AC.51/1998/4, para. 5, for a description of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations procedures). Unlike the that unit's procedure, the discussions did not result in a public document. However, it was suggested that an independent evaluation of the United Nations recent experience in Cambodia in general and a separate assessment of the electoral assistance operation would complement the discussions of the day. There was no clear-cut conclusion on the outcome of the mission similar to those which are included in both the Gerber and the Wentges' reviews. Future lessons learned studies of the Electoral Assistance Division should take into account the methodologies developed for external assessments.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

A. Concluding observations

69. *Effectiveness, efficiency and relevance.* During the period under review, 1992–1998, electoral assistance under the auspices of the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs was provided to 68 Member States, mainly in the forms of coordination and support for international observation and technical assistance. These activities have made significant contributions to the conduct of specific elections in many Member States. They have also contributed to the development of electoral institutions in some of these States. This impact has been achieved by expenditures that were small in

comparison with those of peacekeeping and other large-scale missions with electoral responsibilities.

70. *Lessons learned.* High-quality assessments of experience exist in this area, and lessons learned procedures are in place for large-scale missions and have begun for smaller-scale missions as well. Handbooks, manuals and checklists exist for virtually most aspects of assistance related to specific elections. It is generally agreed that United Nations electoral assistance activities in Malawi in 1993–1994 and in Mexico in 1994 were models of success. The identity of the more problematic experiences is also fairly clear, but it is more difficult to draw lessons from these cases. The United Nations should continue to be selective in its response to requests for electoral assistance by requiring preconditions endorsed by the General Assembly to be in place.

71. *Evolution of the context of United Nations assistance.* Since the Electoral Assistance Division was established, many regional and other intergovernmental organizations and several NGOs have acquired a great deal of experience in electoral assistance and developed sophisticated capacities in its provision. More importantly, most new and newly restored democracies have now conducted two or even three rounds of multi-party elections and so now need assistance that is not primarily focused on the mechanics of the election itself but on building up and sustaining the capacities of democratic institutions. The mandates in electoral assistance given by the General Assembly to the Secretariat have broadened to reflect this evolution. The UNDP governance programme provides an appropriate organizational setting for its electoral assistance. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights provides another such context through its technical cooperation programme of support to Governments and civil society in human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The work of the Electoral Assistance Division, however, has not fully adjusted to broader realities and mandates. With the recent appointment of a new Director, the Division now appears to be in a position to find useful roles in the new circumstances.

B. Recommendations

72. The following are the recommendations of OIOS:

Recommendation 1. Guidelines to Member States seeking electoral assistance

Revised guidelines, fully reflecting the broader and longer-term mandates given to the Secretariat over the last few years, including post-election assistance to contribute to the sustainability of electoral processes, gender perspective mainstreaming and the lessons of best practice learned from recent experience with electoral assistance, should be annexed, for consideration by the Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, to the report of the Secretary-General requested in Assembly resolution 52/129.

Recommendation 2. Orientation and responsibilities of the Electoral Assistance Division/Department of Political Affairs

The Electoral Assistance Division/Department of Political Affairs should concentrate its work on:

(a) The *needs assessment* stage of responding to requests for electoral assistance, being more proactive in anticipating such requests, and the subsequent discussions with Governments leading to agreement on the nature of assistance to be provided and the assignment of primary responsibility for each assistance project to

the appropriate United Nations organization. In general, subsequent activity by the Division/Department should be restricted to guidance on the political aspects of any problems that might arise and coordination;

(b) The re-establishment and development of *an electoral assistance network* of governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations active in electoral assistance, and the facilitation of timely exchange of information among members by means of a Web site and the convening of periodic meetings of the network;

(c) Contributions to *intergovernmental political debate* on (i) enhancing the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections and the promotion of democratization, (ii) respect for the principles of national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States, and (iii) support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies;

(d) Coordination and facilitation of *lessons learned* from electoral assistance and democratization activities, including the development of systematic and shared procedures, and the formulation and revision of handbooks, guidelines and codes of good practice;

(e) Facilitation of the development of *regional associations* of electoral officials, including training and the exchange of experience and information among them;

(f) The mainstreaming of *gender issues* in all of the above activities;

(g) Actively soliciting *extrabudgetary funds*, perhaps through an annual pledging meeting in cooperation with UNDP, for the electoral assistance trust fund, and annual reporting on activities and expenditures to donors.

Recommendation 3. Allocation of responsibilities within the United Nations

The Departments of Political Affairs, Peacekeeping Operations and Economic and Social Affairs, UNDP, the Office for Project Services and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights should reach an agreement by the end of 1999 on the allocation of responsibilities for an integrated response of the United Nations system to requests for assistance with electoral processes, as broadly conceived by General Assembly mandates. This agreement should cover procedures for handling requests by Member States; the maintenance of United Nations rosters and databases, the periodic training of United Nations officials, including resident representatives, and other elements of institutional preparedness and memory; and lessons learned procedures and fund-raising for electoral activities.

(*Signed*) Karl Th. **Paschke**
Under-Secretary-General
for Internal Oversight Services

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 16*

[2] *The World's Women 1995: Trends and Statistics* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XVII.2)

[3] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 6*

[4] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 6* and corrigendum

[5] Guidelines for electoral assistance, June 1996, and supplement

[6] See Organization of American States, *Manual for the Organization of Election Observation Missions* (Washington, D.C., 1998); see also OAS Web site and brochure on the Unit

[7] See General Assembly resolutions 2200 A (XXI), which entered into force in 1976; 45/150 of 18 December 1990; 46/137 of 17 December 1991; 47/138 of 18 December 1992; 48/131 of 20 December 1993; 49/190 of 23 December 1994; 50/185 of 22 December 1995; and 52/129 of 12 December 1997.

[8] See General Assembly resolutions 45/151 of 18 December 1990; 46/130 of 17 December 1991; 47/130 of 18 December 1992; 48/124 of 20 December 1993; 49/180 of 23 December 1994; 50/172 of 22 December 1995; and 52/119 of 12 December 1997.

[9] A/46/609; A/47/668; A/48/590; A/49/675; A/50/736; A/51/761; A/52/474; A/48/1; A/49/1; A/50/1; A/51/1; A/52/1; and A/53/1

[10] A/49/30; A/50/133; A/51/31; A/52/18; and A/53/31

[11] A/50/332; A/51/761; A/52/513; and A/53/554

[12] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1520

[13] Guy S. Goodwill-Gill, "Codes of conduct for elections", study prepared for IPU (Geneva, IPU, 1998)

[14] See E/AC.51/1994/3, annex II

[15] See A/53/554

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In-depth evaluation of the electoral assistance programme

Note by the Secretary-General

Corrigendum

Table 1

Replace table 1 with the following table:

99-16683 (E) 040699

Table 1

Evolution of electoral assistance mandates provided by the General Assembly under the item "Enhancing the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections", 1990–1998

	Session of the General Assembly when the mandated activity was first mentioned in a resolution								
Mandated activity	*45*	*46*	*47*	*48*	*49*	*50*	*51*	*52*	*53*
Electoral assistance at request of Member States	X								
Develop institutional memory		X							
Maintain roster of experts		X							
Collaboration with other United Nations departments and UNDP		X							
Coordination with intergovernmental organizations		X							
Human rights advisory services			X						
Prerequisites for United Nations assistance: adequate time, conditions for free and fair elections, and adequate and comprehensive reporting of results				X					
Assistance before and after elections, including needs assessment missions				X					
Programmes for consolidation of democratic process				X					
Coordination of election preparation/observation with NGOs				X					
Post-election assistance to contribute to stability and continuity of electoral processes					X				
Support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to democratization activities					X				
UNDP civil service reform and governance					X				
Enhancing capacity of electoral institutions						X			
Post-election assistance to contribute to sustainability of electoral processes								X	
Respond to evolving nature of requests and growing need for medium-term assistance								X	